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MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN FREEMAN.

BY S. R. SMITH.

THE ENTIRE PROCEEDS OF THIS WORK, AFTER DEFRAYING THE EXPENSE OF PUBLICATION, WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE AID OF THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF MR. FREEMAN.

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PREFACE.

In presenting the following work to the public, the Author is influenced by the single motive of rendering it subservient to the pecuniary interest of the family of his late lamented friend. It was natural to cherish the recollection of a good man—and it is desirable to render his example useful to community.

No apology is offered for the book, or for the style in which it is written. To state facts was the principal object, and these are communicated in the way and in the terms most convenient and familiar to the writer.

Should the question ever occur, Why have we not recorded more of the faults of the subject of this Memoir, among his virtues?—the only reason we can offer in reply, is—that without presuming him to be faultless, we have faithfully recorded all we knew.

That a few unimportant errors may have occurred in relation to dates, is more than probable. Nor will this be matter of surprise, when it is known that our only resource for particulars, is the memory. For unparalleled as the fact is—Mr. Freeman did not leave a single word in writing, from which it was possible to derive the least information.

The incidents of his early life—his first efforts to acquire an education, were detailed by himself to the

writer, and have been fully sustained by his family and friends. An intimate personal acquaintance, familiar intercourse, and the unrestrained confidence of friendship, enables us to vouch for nearly every period and every event of his ministry.

With the hope that the example of intellectual and manly effort—of persevering fidelity in the pursuit of knowledge—of humble and uncompromising virtue—of Christian faith, and ardent piety, and general usefulness, which constitute the subject of the following pages, may be rendered beneficial to community—this book is respectfully presented to an enlightened and benevolent public, by THE AUTHOR.

Clinton, May, 1835.

MEMOIR OF REV. JOHN FREEMAN.

CHAPTER I.

His Birth, Education and Habits.

Perhaps no member of the religious community to which the lamented subject of the following brief memoir was attached, can be more deserving of an abiding place in the recollections of his friends. And certainly none can hope that his own life and labors will be more interesting or useful, as an example to the rising generation. He was a "self-made man," and lived to see much of the fruit and enjoy the reward of his well-directed industry.

Rev. John Freeman, like most Americans, inherited no honors but those he earned. He was born at Lebanon, New-Hampshire, on the 14th day of May, 1800; and was a surviving twin-son of Roger and Polly Skinner Freeman. At the age of six months he suffered the greatest loss that infant weakness can sustain, in the death of his mother. Nature has provided no adequate remedy for such a calamity; and the future destiny of the man through his whole life, is too commonly greatly affected and influenced by such an event. He was now thrown into the lap of strangers, and passed from family to family, as circumstances or sympathy dictated, until the health of the little sufferer was greatly impaired, and the foundations of disease too deeply laid to be ever effectually removed by future care or kindness. As soon as the family arrangements would permit, he was taken to that best of all places for man or child—to his home. Here he became the object of the most affectionate solicitude and almost maternal

care of a step-mother, who appears to have discharged the difficult and delicate duties of her station with uncommon fidelity; and who was in due time repaid by the filial gratitude of her early charge.

At this time, it is supposed, that the father of Mr. Freeman was in easy circumstances. But from several general facts, it may be inferred that the estate, whatever it was, soon declined. The extreme rigors of poverty, however, appear never to have fallen upon the family, and though depressed, they were neither wretched nor despised. And with the single exception of the subject of these remarks, the children were evidently as well educated as others in moderate circumstances.

Of the subsequent four or five years of the life of Mr. Freeman, we know little more, than that his mind was left almost wholly uncultivated. Some attempts were indeed made to give him an elementary education, but the extreme delicacy of his health would not admit of the confinement of school. The same cause united with parental tenderness, or perhaps inability to teach, prevented his receiving that attention and those instructions at home, which might have remedied, to a great extent, the difficulties under which he labored. For children of feeble constitutions and sickly habits—either because they are disqualified for engaging in the usual sports of childhood, or from some latent mental peculiarity—are generally capable of learning from books with uncommon facility.—And the subsequent attainments of the individual here referred to, furnish abundant evidence that a small proportion of the time usually spent in school, would have been sufficient to have placed him on a level, at least, with boys of his own age, in literary knowledge. And a few minutes daily devoted to such purposes, could neither endanger the health of the body, nor the strength of the mind, of a child

which was capable of any other physical or mental exertion.

Parents seem not to be aware of the facilities which they possess for giving instruction, nor indeed of the vast amount of knowledge which they can impart almost without an effort. It is by no means surprising that children should not know that a single hour in a day, and every day, properly directed, will in a few years make them not merely well-informed, but learned: but it is matter of astonishment that common observation does not impress this truth upon the minds of parents. They may indeed presume that they are incapable of teaching; and to a given extent, this is doubtless true. But every parent who can read, can teach his child to do so; and then, by furnishing him with suitable books, and allowing the requisite pittance of time, the work of instruction will go on without further trouble.

It is a common error which supposes most children averse to study. This is by no means the case. And the difficulty lies in the prevailing opinion, that children must be taught by rule. As though a man could never discharge a musket without first learning the technical forms of military exercise. Rules and forms of science are proper and necessary in their place; but he who would force them upon the mind of a child as preparatory to more general information, will commonly find his efforts unavailing. And he will discover, when too late for remedy, that instead of a love of study, he has inspired indifference and disgust at the proffered means of knowledge. Let children first read—read every thing not subversive of their taste or their morals—and they will, with perfect cheerfulness, adopt the necessary rules of science the moment they perceive their utility.

Parents should also be induced to encourage habits of

study in their children, for another and a very important reason. Their social and moral characters will depend very much upon the manner in which their leisure hours are employed. This is especially the case in relation to the evening. For there are comparatively few children who can make home agreeable, if they are unemployed. The habit of reading prevents the child from seeking amusements abroad, from forming improper and vicious associations, and from the nameless miseries and degradation of a life of indolence, ignorance and crime.

The family of Mr. Freeman, while he was yet young, removed to Saratoga Springs, at which place he continued principally to reside, until a very few years before his death. And here, also, were carried out the cold and moody peculiarities of an untutored and vigorous mind—a mind conscious of its power, and equally sensible that its energies were neither known nor appreciated. Being almost an utter stranger to all the acquirements which commonly distinguish youth, and despising most of its amusements as ridiculous or improper, he was eminently singular. His notions of self-respect kept him from soliciting those attentions which a foolish pride prevented others from tendering, and he remained almost alone in the midst of the multitude.

With a sickly constitution and, of course, an exceedingly irritable temperament, it was a natural consequence that he should become, at an early age, gloomy, dispirited and reckless. For though destitute of every thing like an education suited to the powers of his mind, that mind was perpetually and intensely active. Nothing but books seems to have escaped his observation. He thought and discriminated, when others were unconscious of his ability to do either with effect; and appears to have formed uncommonly correct opinions of nearly every thing except

himself. His very accurate knowledge of the principles of human nature, and of the feelings and affections of the heart, for which he was so much distinguished in after life, must be attributed to his habits of judging of the motives and characters of those around him, at that early age. Indeed, it grew into more than mere habit—it became a settled principle with him, as with some other deep thinkers, to draw his views of the human character from men, rather than from books.

The taciturn inclination so long cherished, disqualified him, to a great extent, for the society of others. For, wanting words in which to convey his ideas, as well as the ability to use the few at his command in a proper manner, he was overwhelmed with embarrassment. His native shrewdness enabled him to perceive and fully to appreciate his situation. He was sensible of the light in which he must be regarded by those whose good fortune or superior application had enabled them to acquire better information. His great want of the materials for conversation, and the wretched corruption of the few words that constituted his vocabulary, were now viewed with the mingled feelings of indignation and despair. And he has often said that, making a virtue of necessity, he endeavored to turn his ignorance to account, and took a species of perverse satisfaction in mutilating his words, and distorting their pronunciation as much as possible. For having abandoned all hopes of appearing or conversing like others, he determined to perpetuate the separation and distinguish himself, by deepening and widening the chasm that lay between them.

Few incidents in the life of Mr. Freeman appear to have furnished reason for so deep and lasting regret, as this successful effort to be unlike all others. For while it disfigured the comeliness of speech—so lovely in early

youth—it prevented strangers from forming either a right, or even a kind opinion of his mind or his motives. The numberless little condescensions which almost every man tenders to the discreet boy, were seldom conferred on this mimic bravado; and he seems for a time to have been almost abandoned as a desperate and intractable spirit, doomed to seclusion and wretchedness.

Nor is this all—the time eventually came when these unseemly acquisitions were to be forgotten, and correct views and practices established in their stead. And it is not difficult to conceive that the labor of correction was greatly enhanced by the magnitude of the corruptions to be overcome. Ignorance is much easier remedied, than when it assumes the forms and combinations which result from its union with error; as the traveller performs less labor by being put in the right path in the first instance, than if necessitated to retrace his steps after having for some time pursued a wrong one. The inveterate power of the habit thus strangely formed, cost many a vain regret and years of anxious vigilance and toil.

Happily for himself and for his friends, this reckless indifference to his true interest did not lead him into vice. His moral feelings and principles were retained in their purity, and were exerted with their accustomed force.—That he might have deviated at times from the direct path of rectitude, is not improbable; but that his aberrations were comparatively few and of no great moment, is abundantly evident. In the midst of this wild and romantic career—this revelry of untutored fancy—this splenetic disgust at established modes of speech, his heart was the abode of correct principles and the kindest affections. His integrity was incorruptible, his regard for truth and honor uncompromising, and his zeal for what he esteemed right was manly and persevering. These redeeming charac-

teristics secured universal confidence in his word, and the highest respect for the principles by which he was governed.

He was now fifteen years of age, at which it is customary to commence the acquisition of some handicraft trade, or to enter upon a regular course of studies preparatory to a profession. And whether from accident or choice, from the determinations of his own mind or the advice and direction of friends, is not known; he became an apprentice to the tailoring business, to a gentleman in Saratoga. This event, though apparently of no particular importance, must still be regarded in the present instance as determining the destiny of one of the few men who are worthy of imitation.

Indeed, little as mankind generally appear to think of the act of entering upon an apprenticeship, or of placing a child under the particular course of mental and physical discipline which is to determine the business of life; it is in all its bearings one of the most interesting and important transactions appertaining to the duty or the life of man. The habits, the property, the usefulness and respectability, and even the moral character of the man very much depend upon this single event, in which the boy alone seems to be immediately concerned. The subject was viewed in this light by Mr. Freeman. And he always spoke of the event that placed him "under tutors and governors" for the acquisition of a respectable calling, as one that laid the foundation of a life of usefulness and honor.

It was during his apprenticeship that the habits of patient attention to business, and care of the most trifling as well as the most important concerns, were formed; and that persevering industry for which he was so much distinguished, was acquired. Nothing which appertained to his professional duties passed unobserved, and if he was not the most expert workman, he understood his business and performed it in the most honorable manner.

The employment was peculiarly adapted to his slender frame and feeble constitution; and it was also extremely congenial to his thinking habits. And though unremittingly employed, he evidently acquired what may be termed a mechanical fondness for the business of his profession. There is something exceedingly interesting in the influence which the habitual performance of the same kind of labor exerts over the feelings. The steady operations of nature can win us over from aversion to any given pursuit, to acquiescence in its fitness or propriety; and then commonly sanctifies her rewards by making the service agreeable.

To the attention and care required by the duties of his calling, he was indebted for another trait of character of immense importance in the economy of life. It was an orderly and methodical manner of arranging and conducting his business, and disposing of his affairs. It was doubtless in a great measure owing to this, that he had always something to do—and could do what he undertook, without materially interfering with some other duty. For having ascertained how much could be accomplished in a given time, he so disposed of the day as to finish its proper business, however diversified its labors. So that without being perplexed and hurried, he effected more than most men, and enjoyed his full proportion of leisure. In one word, he acquired the art—for it is an art that few ever learn—of doing but one thing at a time. All his powers were thus concentrated, as it were, to a focus, and their impression was in proportion. And this procedure gives another advantage over those who undertake too much at once. But one pursuit is abandoned when duty calls to attend upon another, and fewer things are left unfinished. How much confusion and idleness would be prevented in our world, could every one learn that there

is generally time enough to do every thing, if we undertake only one thing at a time!

The gentleman * to whom the interests of Mr. Freeman were committed, was undoubtedly faithful to his trust. His conduct must have been both kind and unexceptionable. For he effectually secured the gratitude and esteem of his pupil, who was one of the most cautious and close observers of the conduct and motives of men. And he seldom erred materially in his estimate of the character of those around him.

But there were very interesting reasons why the best affections of the pupil should, in this instance, rise up and rest upon the master. That master possessed sufficient discernment to enable him, in a great measure, to estimate the worth of the individual under his charge. Besides, he had found him a solitary, untutored and helpless youth, abandoned by others, not because he was corrupt, but because he shunned society. And this man took him by the hand—like the good Samaritan, "bound up his wounds," and poured into his cold bosom the warming influence of kindness. The affections which had long lain dormant, now germinated, and putting forth their tendrils first embraced the benefactor who had nurtured them. But they entwined not him alone—they spread abroad, perpetually receiving new accessions of strength, until they encircled the whole moral creation.

* Mr. J. Clement, of Saratoga.

CHAPTER II.

Professes Religion—Begins Study.

Persons of contemplative habits naturally turn their attention to the consideration of religious subjects at an earlier age than others of a different temperament. Not that they are always the first to adopt the Christian profession. The most careless, indifferent or profligate are sometimes excited and awakened to religious impressions, by their very follies, extravagances and crimes. But this is too commonly rather the reaction of outraged feelings, than the deliberate operation of the mind. Hence the very great difference in the stability of young professors.

The passionate—those who estimate the sum of their religion by the strength and flow of their feelings—are constantly rising and falling—alternating between the extremes of light and darkness, and partaking successively of all the joys of hope and all the miseries of despair. On the other hand, the youth who enters upon the profession of Christianity because he has reflected upon its principles, and imbibed its spirit, and understands its truths, walks in perpetual sunshine. There is an evenness in in his feelings, a confidence in his hopes, and an uniformity in his obedience, to which the subject of mere feverish excitement is an utter stranger.

Mr. Freeman may be said to have been predisposed to early religious impressions. Secluded by peculiar circumstances from the scenes which generally engross much of the time and attention of youth, he pondered upon those great truths which are calculated to impart a more substantial happiness than mere amusements can ever con-

vey. Here he discovered subjects of infinite moment—subjects possessing a grandeur adapted to the aspirations of the soul, and filling the ample measure of its desires. But as yet, no event had transpired which called him to make a public profession of Christianity. He had pondered upon its truths for years, but under the influence of prevailing views, had supposed that strong excitement alone, could authorize the avowal of his faith.

About the time that he entered upon his twentieth year, he became the subject of very great excitement. Considerable religious interest prevailed at the time, and his ardent sympathies caught the contagion of feeling that surrounded him. He was not passionate, but he felt strongly, deeply, the weight of gratitude laid upon him, by the display of the divine mercy through the Gospel. And encumbered, as every system known to him was, with the prevailing errors respecting the depravity of man, and his liability to interminable misery, his sensitive mind was almost overwhelmed with despair. He found comfort however—a comfort which never for a moment forsook him in subsequent life; but which augmented with every day's experience, as its basis enlarged by the acquisition of religious knowledge.

In view of the sufferings which the doctrines of inherent moral depravity and endless perdition and wo have brought upon delicate and sensitive minds, it is impossible to suppress the feelings of congratulation that they have nearly reached the period of their termination, and will soon be known only as the subjects of history. Nor can we view the unavailing struggles which are still made to sustain them, by a few interested men, other than the efforts of desperation. The fanatical extravagances which disturb the public peace, the numerous instances of religious insanity, and the horrid suicides which occur so

frequently, will be required by the next generation at the hands of the deluded and daring men, by whose machinations they are produced.

Religion is valuable only as it promotes the moral and social well-being of its possessor, and augments his happiness with substantial comforts imparted by the hope of immortality. In this light it was viewed by Mr. Freeman, who esteemed it in proportion to its importance in effecting these ends; and who applied it like every other acquisition, to practical purposes, And this is the natural inference of unsophisticated reason. His mind had not been polluted by the prevailing error respecting the uselessness of virtue; and he felt, what every reflecting man must feel, that religion was designed to be the companion of every day, rather than a weekly visitor on the Sabbath.

These impressions, after the delay of a few weeks, resulted in his union with the Presbyterian church, at Saratoga Springs. This measure was undoubtedly adopted by him on the most mature and deliberate reflection of which he was capable. He desired the privilege of communion and the watch-care of the members of the church; and though at a future time this connexion was the subject of some perplexity, it was never one of particular regret. None of the petty considerations, which sometimes appear to govern the conduct of the young convert, had any influence upon him. It was not because it was fashionable, nor because he thought it respectable to be a member of this particular sect, or of any sect; but because his views at the time more nearly accorded with those of the Presbyterians, than with any others. He was accustomed to act from principle, and had already learned to make up his determinations from the uncontrolled exercise of his own judgment. An effectual illus-

tration of this remark is contained in the following singular circumstance. From some cause over which he seems to have had no control, but probably from the imperceptible influence of the opinions of those with whom he was most intimately connected, he felt it his duty to be *baptized by immersion.* Repeated efforts were made to dissuade him from his purpose, and the usual arguments were applied for the satisfaction of his mind, but without success. The clergyman, a Mr. Griswold, whom he greatly respected and tenderly loved, endeavored by every means of persuasion to induce him to relinquish his stand, and conform to the usual custom of the Presbyterian church; but equally without effect. He had made up his mind—it was a matter of conscience, and what that pointed out as his duty, no earthly considerations could induce him to abandon or disobey. Of this both the pastor and the church became fully satisfied, and consequently, for his accommodation entirely, the ordinance was administered by a Presbyterian minister.

From this time, his thirst for knowledge was insatiable. He commenced reading—or rather learning to read; his previous attainments having barely enabled him to conquer the familiar lessons of the school books. He improved rapidly, and read with indescribable avidity every work relating to religion that fell into his hands. But the Scriptures, which to him had hitherto been in a great measure "a sealed book," were now studied with a devotion and a diligence seldom equalled, and probably never surpassed.

It is much easier to conceive than to describe the emotions of a powerful mind, when the immense resources of wisdom treasured up in books, are first opened to its admiration. It is like the acquisition of sight to the blind, and may be said to confer a new sense. A new world

displays its riches to our contemplation, and invites us to their enjoyment. Time and distance are annihilated, the past and the present are comprehended in a single glance, and the accumulations of the labor of ages are borne off in triumph, in a few happy hours.

No man was ever more sensible of the loss he had sustained in the want of information concerning books, than Mr. Freeman; and none ever labored more zealously to remedy his misfortunes. Every new acquisition encouraged exertion; and acquisitions multiplied rapidly with him, to whom almost every thing was equally new. The high mental attainments are usually begun in childhood, and by gradual and successive steps reach their consummation. Hence the charm which novelty throws around its subjects, and the sense of the value of mental cultivation, lose alike their fascination and their power. Like the common savings of the economical man, by little and little a fortune is eventually acquired. And though equally valuable, and perhaps equally useful, when thus obtained the transition from poverty to wealth is so gradual as scarcely to be perceived. Not thus is it with the son of poverty, who by some fortunate incident steps at once into affluence. A multitude of new emotions rise up and throng around him, and almost overwhelm him. Mentally, this was the condition of Mr. Freeman. He was in a moment, if not the possessor, at least in the high road to every possession and every honor of a cultivated mind.

The first object of his studies, was the acquisition of substantial religious knowledge—he fervently desired to become "wise unto salvation." And he wished to become more fully acquainted with the doctrines and phraseology of the Bible, for himself—for his own edification. He saw others familiar with its language, with its connexions, with its multiplied truths and its moral bearings;

and he felt how great was the privilege of understanding the law of the Lord. Hence, the little time which he could command during the day and a large proportion of the night, were frequently devoted to the examination of the sacred Volume, and such works as professedly treated on its instructions.

Another and an important reason for a close and thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, was an ultimate preparation for the work of the ministry. The thought of eventually entering upon the duties of that calling, appears to have inspired him from the first moment in which he felt the power of faith, or the importance of the Christian religion. And limited as were his views at this time, of the great plan and process of redemption, he still found sufficient motives in its influence upon his own mind, to desire to bring his fellow-men into its enjoyment. What encouragement, or whether any, was extended to him in the first instance, we have no means of knowing. But within a year or two he was advised to proceed, and some little attention was given by his friends to the progress which he had already made.

It is more than probable that, in the commencement of his studies, Mr. Freeman received no encouragement whatever, to pursue them with a view to the ministry. Such an object must have appeared to all but himself, preposterous in the extreme. And his friends, if they threw no obstacles in his way, would naturally regard it as the fancy of an over-heated mind; which would work its own cure as his ardor cooled, and he encountered the difficulties that lay before him. But if such were their opinions, how little did they know of the man! He was never fanatical—he never founded his pretensions to the ministerial calling upon any other impression, than that the Gospel was a great and glorious truth; and one which he could

so communicate as to be useful in its promotion. And his whole subsequent life demonstrated, that difficulties had no terrors for him. His motto was—what man has done, man can still do.

In the choice of books, he labored under peculiar embarrassments. No attention appears to have been given to his wants in this respect; and he possessed no means of knowing what works were best adapted to his circumstances. The consequence was, that much time was spent, and great labor nearly thrown away, upon works which were of no other immediate use to him, than merely to improve his reading and enlarge his acquaintance with the language. Volumes of sermons by distinguished preachers—devotional effusions from the hand of some pietist—meditations and reflections by devout persons, and many others of a similar description, constituted the miscellaneous mass that occupied him for several years. These works, however proper and valuable in their place, were by no means calculated to fit him for the ministry. They might, indeed, cherish his devotional feelings, but they neither enlarged his views nor instructed his mind in the way and degree that his situation required. And if other evidence were wanting, the fact alone, that he was permitted to devote so much time to this course of reading, is abundant proof that in the first instance, his friends took no interest in his studies. His minister in particular must have known that his success depended on his making far other attainments; and these, in time, he obviously recommended. There was, however, a species of cruelty in suffering him to perform so much to so little purpose; this very protraction of his labor greatly enfeebled his constitution, and aided in accelerating his dissolution.

These studies were not wholly lost upon him—as, indeed, nothing can be entirely unproductive in the hands

of such a man. They occasionally suggested queries, which he found himself unable to answer to the satisfaction of his own mind. Not that they involved any doubts respecting the truth or propriety of the doctrine which he professed: on the contrary, they related exclusively to the peculiarities, and discriminations, and metaphysical speculations which the nature of his reading was calculated to excite in an active and inquiring mind. To remove these perplexities, and to answer his inquiries, recourse was had to his minister. From him, he appears to have received at all times the most affectionate personal attentions and the kindest offices of friendship. And in most, if not in all cases, his explanations were satisfactory, and his manner invariably conciliating. And with him he spent as much time as their respective circumstances and duties would permit.

Till this period, his social capabilities seem scarcely to have been developed; but they now put forth with rapidity and power, on a theme that filled his heart. In his minister, too, he appears to have found a congenial spirit—one who could sympathize with him, and who from this time, appears to have omitted no occasion of encouraging his pupil in the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of virtue. Certain it is, that among the subjects which his strong memory cherished with peculiar fondness, none were more precious than the social evenings spent with this man, in endeavors to improve his understanding and to mend his heart. It is probable that, until this time, the talents of Mr. Freeman had never been in any proper sense appreciated by his preacher. And this accounts for the long neglect respecting his studies, which he now seemed desirous of atoning for, by devoting considerable attention, not merely to his religious acquisitions, but to the improvement of his taste. And he did this in a man-

ner, of all others the least calculated to oppress and overwhelm his pupil with a sense of the difficulties before him, or with the consciousness of his own ignorance. The method invariably pursued was that of answering inquiries and suggesting subjects for free and mutual discussion. In this way, it will be readily perceived, the latent abilities of the inquirer himself would be called into action. He would be required to render a reason for his doubts, and by skilful management, would be led to solve them. This, while it would induce a degree of self-confidence, would naturally encourage further efforts; and both the social powers and the faculties of the mind would be improved. Another consequence would follow, highly favorable to the progress of a diffident and sensitive youth. It would save him from the humiliation of feeling the full weight of his ignorance—or, at least, enable his instructor to impart information without appearing to teach. Besides, while the best informed have so much yet to learn, and the most ignorant but little more, he must be an extraordinary man who does not improve himself while instructing his fellows.

In the mean time, Mr. Freeman became favorably known to the congregation of which he was a member—not merely as an upright man and exemplary Christian, but one, who, when the occasion required, could impart edification to others. He felt the influence that Christianity was calculated to exert over the human mind and over the conduct of life. And he could not repress the ever-present desire of communicating to others, the truths that inspired, and the feelings that warmed his own heart. His wishes were therefore gratified, by occasional opportunities of addressing his brethren in their numerous meetings for mutual exhortation and improvement. But his native benevolence and cherished liberality, induced him

to disregard the limits prescribed by the creed of his adoption. His devotions were kindled at every Christian altar, and his affectionate spirit found kindred in all the sincere worshippers of God. He loved Christianity for its own intrinsic excellence—for the moral principles it cherished, and for the comforting hopes it awakened in the breast of the believer. And he loved every human being in whom he saw the spirit of the Gospel reflected, and could cordially unite with him in the offerings of prayer, and praise, and thanksgivings at the same altar. The Baptists and Methodists particularly shared his Christian charity and fellowship, and he participated in their religious services as "a child at home." In their conferences and prayer-meetings he frequently bore a part in the exercises, where the fervor of his zeal broke forth in those extemporaneous effusions which they ever encourage, and which, in this instance, laid the foundation of those extraordinary efforts, that in subsequent life never failed to fix the attention, and often threw the charm of rapture over his congregations.

It is a question of no little importance, how far the practice of calling out the gifts of the different members of religious congregations should be encouraged. Some denominations have adopted and steadily pursued the practice; others appear to be gradually coming into it; and others still pertinaciously reject it as useless or injurious. That on many occasions, well-meant services are exceedingly unprofitable, as well as painful, cannot be denied; as some very intelligent and worthy men never can attain the ability to speak in public to edification. And the consequence is, that whenever they attempt it, they exert themselves to no good purpose, and cruelly tax the patience, and torture the feelings of their hearers. On the other hand, it not unfrequently calls forth talents, which had otherwise

remained like the diamond in the mine—unnoticed, valueless and useless. This would probably have been the case with Mr. Freeman. He would have remained so long in utter ignorance of his own powers—would have been so little appreciated by others—that after languishing in the perplexities of uncertainty and becoming discouraged by delay, he would have abandoned all hopes of the ministry. As it was, he was constantly receiving encouragement, from the time he was permitted to address the congregation; and daily gaining experience, and improving his mind and capacity to be useful as a preacher.

It may, therefore, be worthy of the consideration of the denomination of which he was a member, and which very seldom holds meetings under circumstances calculated to elicit the speaking talents of any but the preacher, whether they are pursuing the best method for the promotion of their own interest; or the most effectual one for bringing forward and aiding such young men as would do honor to the ministry. Certainly, in a denomination where the greatest want has ever been that of a sufficient number of efficient preachers, every reasonable measure should be adopted to supply the deficiency. It is well known that, in the public assemblies of the primitive Christians, different individuals were accustomed to take part in the conduct of the exercises. And though customs as well as times have greatly changed, it is by no means demonstrated, that the assistance of laymen in the offices of public worship, can be neither proper nor useful. It was the opinion of Mr. Freeman, that Universalists were greatly deficient in this particular. He remembered with peculiar satisfaction the happy hours in which he participated in all the ordinances of the sanctuary; where his zeal, excited by the occasion, sustained him in the discharge of duties, under which a more chastened and cultivated spi-

rit would have sunk with diffidence. And he believed that as many conscientious and able ministers would be raised up in the conference-room, as by any other possible means.

CHAPTER III.

Death of his Father—Marriage—Domestic Habits.

It will be recollected that the mother of Mr. Freeman died during his infancy. As he was about entering upon the scenes of active life and the cares and labors of manhood, his remaining parent was taken from him. His father, Mr. Roger Freeman, died sometime in 1821. But of the particulars respecting his death we have no information—and very few in relation to his life. It appears that he was a soldier of the revolution, and bore his part in the great drama of a nation's emancipation. And as his circumstances required, he availed himself of the patriot's privilege and received the humble pittance called a pension, which his country too long withheld, and too sparingly gave to those who toiled, and suffered, and bled in its cause.

What particular religious opinions, or whether any were professed by him until late in life, is unknown. However this may be, he is said to have been, during the latter part of his life, a believer in the doctrine of the restitution. This he appears to have professed, and to have sealed with the highest possible evidence of his sincerity—for he died in the faith of "God's universal grace."

It is natural to suppose that the interests and cares of the household would, on the decease of the father, devolve

to a great extent on the sons. There were four (including the subject of these memoirs) by the first, and one by the latter wife. Mr. Freeman was principally assisted by his half-brother in keeping the family together after the death of their father. But even with this assistance, situated as he must have been, we can scarcely conceive of a condition more perplexing and painful.

Just emerging from an apprenticeship—forming plans for the business of life—devoting that leisure to study, which a sedentary calling and feeble health imperiously required should be spent in wholesome exercise—and withal, poor—the accumulation of cares at such a crisis must have been almost overwhelming. Had he been insensible to his condition, there would be nothing surprising in his continuing to move onward. But stupidity formed no part of his composition. He saw and felt the full amount of his duties and his cares; and nerving himself for the conflict, with a firm reliance upon Heaven, he resolved to sustain himself with the dignity of a man and the fidelity and patience of a Christian.

Sometime in 1823, Mr. Freeman, at the age of twenty-three years, was married to Miss Mary Jenkins—a connexion which greatly augmented his comforts and happiness. His habits and feelings were peculiarly domestic—and his "often infirmities" which from intense application to business and study, were constantly accumulating, rendered home, of all places, most desirable. And he was particularly fortunate in the choice of a companion whose quiet and patient spirit, and indefatigable industry, were eminently calculated to render that home the abode of peace and comfort.

It was here, in the bosom of his little family, that you saw, not merely the close and untiring student—the man of deep thinking and comprehensive views, or the power-

ful and spirit-stirring preacher—but simply the good man. At his fireside he was neither the tyrant nor the slave; but the affectionate husband and the tender parent. He was seldom disobeyed, and his word conveyed no terror—and his requests were complied with rather because they were reasonable, than because they were commands. And with a temperament exceedingly irritable—with health always feeble—perhaps no man ever preserved greater equanimity of temper, attained greater self-command, or gave his friends less occasion to know that he inherited the passions of other men.

Over the expenditures of his household he exercised the most scrupulous and careful supervision; and he made provision to meet its necessities and to promote its comforts to the extent of his means. Economy, however, was in his estimation a fundamental virtue. And when it is said that he went to the extent of his means, it is to be understood that he always calculated to circumscribe his expenses within his income, and to reserve a small balance for possible contingencies, or for the permanent increase of his resources. A rigid adherence to this rule, while it enabled him gradually to accumulate a small property, augmented the relative and actual comforts of his family. Every thing, in the mean time, that related to his pecuniary concerns, was so effectually regulated as to admit of no misapprehension—his business was always free from intricacy, obscurity and embarrassment. And at the period of his death, the settlement of his affairs would have scarcely occupied a single hour; while his debts would have been cancelled with a sum less than twenty dollars.

It will perhaps be asked, whether he did not mistake penuriousness for economy, and habitually indulge a love of gain under the pretext of being prudent? No; for he

was neither fastidious in his economical arrangements, nor inclined to be avaricious. His circumstances had always been such as to teach him the real value of money; and his observation enabled him to distinguish between its use and its abuse. Had he been penurious, his household comforts would have greatly diminished; and if avaricious, his savings must have been proportionably augmented.

In the purchase of books, his principles of economy were put to a severe trial. And though he managed to want but comparatively a few, yet he bought without hesitation nearly all that he supposed he needed. But he made no purchases of this kind from motives of ostentation—his books were designed emphatically for use. And they were used with a fidelity almost peculiar to himself. For he not only read them, but so read them as to imbibe each sentiment that he thought of any value. This he may be said to have beaten and amalgamated with his own ideas, till it was fully incorporated into the general mass; and was no longer a thing foreign to himself, but a portion of his own intellectual energy.

In his intercourse with men, Mr. Freeman was to his best ability, what every man ought to be—honest and upright. No man had higher notions of the value of moral honesty, and few ever illustrated their principles by a more amiable and spotless life. Punctual in the fulfilment of his own engagements, he was extremely desirous that every man should be equally so towards himself—and he who failed of doing so, could not easily disappoint him again. Nothing appeared to disturb his feelings, or lessen his confidence in human nature more than the apparent want of integrity existing among men. And among the subjects which received his particular attention as a minister, none were labored with more zeal, power and effect than the relative duties between man and man.

At home, and in the society of his intimate friends, Mr. Freeman was eminently social and communicative. In his family he was even sportive and playful. But in general society he was inclined to great reserve. This was partly owing to his inflexible diffidence, and partly to his desire of hearing the remarks of persons in very different circumstances, and of different and perhaps opposite opinions. He was accustomed to call this his plan for "studying character." And the result of this kind of study was sometimes developed to the great amusement of his friends when he was disposed to be merry. He held pretence and ostentation in the greatest abhorrence, and would, at times, aim a deadly shaft at its unmasked front from his full quiver of invective and reproof.

His personal friendships were generally formed with great caution, and were consequently enduring. But it was not every man—no, not every good man, who could be his friend. For he would sooner rebuke a friend than an enemy—nay, in some way, or on some occasion, he would certainly discharge what he believed to be his duty in this respect, to those he most esteemed. And this was always done with the kindest intentions; but sometimes with much severity. In this, however, he gave only what he desired to receive. For being sensible that every man had his faults, he was aware that his friends must best know his; and he looked to them for those reproofs, from which he hoped to draw both instruction and amendment.

CHAPTER IV.

His Conversion to Universalism.

In the Autumn of 1824, Rev. D. Skinner removed from New-Hampshire, and located at Saratoga Springs, where he preached, to great acceptance, the doctrine of impartial grace and the consequent holiness and happiness of all mankind. The honest candor of Mr. Freeman would not suffer him to reject as certainly false and pernicious, a system of religious faith, merely because he happened to be ignorant of its principles. His maxim was—to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good." He accordingly went to hear Mr. Skinner—but went with the fullest assurance in his own mind, that he must be a self-deluded man, and who, in consequence, was leading others into the most fatal error.

Not receiving entire satisfaction from the public discourses of Mr. Skinner, he sought the earliest opportunity of forming a personal acquaintance. He adopted this course for the double purpose of leisurely studying the character of the man; and of conversing more freely, and proposing his objections under such circumstances as would enable him to reply. For he was quite confident that the evidences of the endless perdition of a part of the human race, were too numerous and too strong to be successfully resisted. In this, however, he soon found himself greatly mistaken. The uniform kindness and courtesy with which he was treated, and the facility with which his strongest objections were answered, both surprised and embarrassed him: and the uncommon frankness and candor with which his arguments were met and refuted,

induced him to regard with more favor, a doctrine which permitted a man to retain so much benevolence, and to exercise so much candor.

In the mean time he was gradually losing his inveterate prejudices, and acquiring great personal respect and esteem for his new acquaintance; between whom and his own minister (a successor of Mr. Griswold, by the name of Whelpley) he now divided his moments of leisure. So that he was not merely presenting every argument and objection which his own mind could suggest, but all that a well-informed preacher of his own views could furnish, against the doctrine of the restitution. Still, his faith though shaken was not removed, and he consoled himself with the reflection, that it was no certain indication of the error of his own opinions, merely because he could not successfully maintain them. There might be, and probably were, others who were able to do so. And then, he had understood that the preachers of Universalism were a shrewd and crafty race of men—and it could be no matter of surprise, that a plain, honest Christian should not be able to grapple with them in controversy. Yet his own senses revolted at this—in all his conversations on the subject he had detected no chicanery—had seen no guile. What, then, should he think of these things?

At this time Mr. Freeman felt that his situation was peculiarly embarrassing, and even distressing. His religious friends had no suspicion of what was really passing in his own mind; while he was becoming alarmed by the daily increasing conviction that he was, in defiance of all his efforts, continually approaching nearer and nearer towards Universalism. He was not actuated by that false delicacy which is ashamed of growing wiser by the acknowledgment of an error; nor influenced by the pride of opinion, which makes its possessor feel degraded in

abandoning long-cherished views. With him it was the struggle between the fixed determination to do right, and the constant fear of doing wrong. He was sensible that he had no interest in being deceived; and felt no desire to deceive others. To the possible terrors of excommunication he was a stranger—though he appears to have anticipated their application whenever circumstances should call forth the expression of his belief in another creed.

In this situation he resolved on making one more solemn appeal to the Scriptures; fervently praying to God for wisdom to direct him into all truth, and for strength of mind which should enable him to do his duty. The Bible was now read for a new reason—that of ascertaining whether it did, or did not teach the doctrine of the final salvation of all mankind. Happily he was in some respects very favorably situated; for he could apply for the solution of his difficulties to men on either hand, of the first order of talents and information. When in the course of his investigations, he found a passage that seemed to favor the restitution, he immediately applied to his own minister for its exposition—and when, on the other hand, a text appeared to support the doctrine of endless punishment, he presented it to the Universalist minister for interpretation. In this manner he proceeded step by step, till he was not only fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine of the restitution; but had satisfied himself of the nature and import of the passages usually produced as proof of a contrary opinion.

Nearly a year was occupied in these investigations. For it was not until the latter part of 1825, or early in 1826, that he fully obtained the liberty of the Gospel; and to his own satisfaction, the knowledge of the truth. But when the work was completed, perhaps no man ever entered upon "the joy of the Lord" with a purer heart, or

a happier spirit. The views which he had before entertained, though they had kindled his devotions into a flame and awakened very lively hopes in his own breast, had never satisfied his benevolent wishes for the welfare of mankind. In the midst of the light which had been shed upon his mind, there had till now lingered spots of impervious darkness which he possessed no means of eradicating—in the midst of his joys, sorrows would continually spring up, leaving his heart uncomforted.

But the moment the floodtide of everlasting truth was poured over his understanding, it washed forever from his views every remnant of darkness and doubt; and filled his whole soul with joy, and gratitude, and peace. He contemplated the Deity in a new and more endearing relation to his creatures; he looked upon mankind no longer exclusively in their sinful and suffering state—but as the prospective heirs of grace, and "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." A new song was emphatically put into his mouth, and a new spirit animated him. The devotions which had before been rendered with the minglings of grief, now became subjects of indescribable pleasure. The terrors which once filled his soul were expelled by the influence of hope; and the friends over whom he had mourned in the bitterness of his spirit, were now endeared to him by a new bond, that bound them mutually in the bundle of life.

There still remained one heart-felt trial through which he must pass—it was to make the disclosure of his views to those whom he knew it would afflict. And he commenced this necessary work by giving the first information to the person, of all others, most deeply interested—to his companion. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the sensations which such a communication would excite in a tender mind, accustomed to view with senti-

ments of horror, a doctrine so foreign to all her cherished opinions and prejudices; and which, in her apprehension, might lead to a total disregard of all religion, and the loss of both character and friends. Let her speak for herself. "The first time that Mr. Freeman broke his mind to me on the subject of universal grace, bears with considerable weight upon my own mind. It was with much kindness and tender feeling that he spoke upon the subject. But it met with a cold reception from me—it immediately froze up all the better feelings of my nature." But the die was cast, and having been accustomed to place implicit confidence in his integrity and uprightness of intention, she forbore to remonstrate, and submitted the result to the will of Heaven.

The church of which he was a member was soon apprised of his change of views; and the common preliminary labors with those who are esteemed heretics, was almost immediately commenced. The proper officers performed their duty with punctilious faithfulness, and more than ordinary kindness and condescension. For his moral character was so excellent, his piety so sincere and ardent, and his devotions so heart-felt and affectionate, that it was matter of very serious regret to part with him. They endeavored by every means to induce him to remain—or rather to bring him back to the bosom of the church—but in vain. His feelings were too deeply interested, his integrity too great, and his independence too dignified and manful to suffer him for a moment, to think of maintaining a religious connexion in which his heart had no share. And he flung from him, with merited abhorrence, a profession which he could no longer make, without feeling that he was violating his conscience, and acting the hypocrite.

It is greatly to be regretted that there are many who

want that self-respect and honest independence of character, which in similar circumstances, induces them to pursue a very different course. Instead of following out the dictates of honor, duty and conscience—what Heaven itself would smile upon and bless—they appear to think only of the light in which they shall be viewed by a few intolerant professors of religion, and whether the honest avowal of their opinions will be the means of profit or loss. From these considerations alone, thousands bow the knee to the Baal of some sect, whose spirit they hold in abhorrence, and in whose doctrines they have neither faith nor confidence—who secretly pray for the moving of the waters of the public mind, until the diseases of intellect and the follies of a vain superstition shall be cured by the spread of rational, pure and primitive Christianity.

Such men should recollect, that were the public mind what they would have it, still if every one was to act on their principles, and practice after their example, the world, instead of becoming better, would really be so much the worse, as hypocrisy would then be universal. Let them follow the example of Mr. Freeman in this respect, and the desirable period will very soon arrive, when every man will become what God made him to be—an honest man. It may not be in the power of every one to be great, or learned; but it is very possible for all to be just to themselves, and conscientious in their professions.

It so happened, that one of the deacons, whose business it was, from his official station, to labor with Mr. Freeman, did not sustain a very high moral character. For this want he endeavored to compensate as far as possible, by a punctilious performance of the ceremonies of his religion, and the zealous profession of an unimpeachable orthodoxy.—On a certain occasion, and it is believed the last of the kind, on which the officers of the church waited on Mr.

Freeman for the purpose of admonition, he suffered them to exhaust their arguments without material interruption. He then with great good humor asked, whether they did not expect to be saved? "O, yes," was the reply, "we hope for salvation." To which he facetiously added, in reference to the deacon, that if God could in mercy condescend to save such a man, there was sufficient evidence in that single fact, of the salvation of all mankind. That were there no other testimony in relation to the subject, it would be amply satisfactory to him; and in his opinion ought to satisfy them that any further labor in the premises, would be unnecessary and unavailing.

This rebuke had the desired effect, and they abandoned all attempts to change his opinions, or to bring him back to the church; and satisfied themselves with the usual practice of *suspending* him from its fellowship and ordinances, until he should renounce, what they were pleased to call his *heresy*. Beyond this, it is believed, they never proceeded; for down to the period of his death, it was not known to him that he was formally excommunicated from the Presbyterian church. They never attacked his moral character, his religious feelings they appear to have uniformly respected, and they accused him of no other fault, than that of error in opinion.

CHAPTER V.

Elementary Studies—General Plan of Study.

With the enlargement of his faith, the zeal of Mr. Freeman to enter the ministry was proportionably augmented; and he now made greater efforts for the attainment of that object than he had before done. But it is scarcely possible to convey an adequate idea of his exertions, by any description. He must have been seen and known at the time, to enable any mind to form a correct conception of all his labors in surmounting the difficulties with which he was surrounded. It must be recollected that his constitution was feeble, his health poor at best, and that his own, and the support of a small family depended entirely upon his daily labor—that he was necessarily occupied with the duties of his calling during the day and evening, while surrounded by the workmen and customers of the establishment; and it will be readily conjectured, that from such a place the direct means of scientific improvement must, to a great extent, be excluded. The time must have passed away in labor, attendance and conversation. And what time could remain, that might with propriety be employed in study? There was really none, that almost any other man would have ever thought of so appropriating.

Besides these inconveniences, he had never, until some four or five years previous, read at all. And for the reasons which have been already explained, his reading had been almost entirely confined to religious works, and the more important study of the Bible. Of the elements of science he was, to a great degree, yet ignorant; and of

general literature, his knowledge scarcely extended beyond the meaning of the terms. The business, therefore, of the child, was yet to be performed by the man—but he brought the mind of a man to the work.

He now commenced a more systematic course of study, and laid the foundation in the simplest elements of the English language. For he was fully aware that, however extensive his reading and general knowledge might be, he could never hope to succeed as a public speaker without a thorough acquaintance with the grammar of his native tongue. A certain portion of his study hours was, therefore, regularly devoted to the acquisition of the English grammar. The time allotted to this particular object, was set apart with more than usual formality, and faithfully appropriated, even when he happened to be abroad, to its proper business. Nor was it considered by him as a work that might be despatched in a few weeks, or months, and then laid aside as no longer necessary. He pursued it for years—not, indeed, regularly; but at times, and as circumstances seemed to require.

Either from the necessity of the case, or from some singularity of taste—or perhaps the influence of both—he acquired the habit of carrying on a number of very dissimilar studies apparently at the same time. And it was matter of astonishment, to witness the perfect ease, and even convenience with which he could transfer his attention from one subject to another; and concentrate the powers of his mind at one moment on the pronunciation of a monosyllable, and the next, on the consideration of the great laws which regulate the moral universe. He read works on theology, history and biography—natural and moral philosophy and geography—rhetoric, logic and political economy—and a few of mere taste and amusement. Nothing came amiss from which he could hope to

draw information, or derive improvement. And piling these around him in promiscuous and stately heaps, he would alternately give his undivided attention to subjects the most unlike, and having no immediate and obvious connexion.

In the midst of all this seeming confusion, there still reigned an all-pervading system of order. Thus when reading—perhaps some work on divinity—he would have occasion to find the definition of a word—this would, of course, lead him to notice its proper pronunciation. At the same time, the subject itself might lead to the consideration of the geographical situation of some particular place, to the history of its inhabitants, to their habits, customs and modes of thinking. To reach all these particulars, it became necessary to refer to as many different books—and then he would return to the original subject. When fatigued, he read light works; and took up the first that occurred, almost regardless of its contents. For poetry, however, he seems to have had no particular taste. And while he appreciated the splendid imagery and lofty imaginings of some of the best poets, he complained that the reading of their works made him gloomy and melancholy.

This discursive method—or rather mode of reading—was doubtless attended with one effect of the utmost importance to him; though unintentional and unperceived at the time. It kept his mind more free from the languor and exhaustion consequent upon continued application to a given pursuit; and in making its rounds from one subject to another, it came back to the principal refreshed, rather than wearied by the excursion. And it is more than probable that he accomplished more—that he attained a larger amount of information in a given time—by these means, than by any other that he could have chosen.

Mr. Freeman satisfied himself that his stock of words was much too small; and that he was still deficient in pronunciation. He accordingly procured an extensive vocabulary with a view to remedy these defects. It has been remarked that he had, at a time when most susceptible of an accurate and easy pronunciation, purposely trifled with the subject. He now felt the full weight of the evils produced by this rash experiment; and he adopted the only means in his power to atone for his former folly, and overcome his defects. There appears, however, to have been some natural defect in his organs of speech; as there continued to be, in defiance of his best efforts, some few words, which it was with great difficulty he could distinctly pronounce. But he was aware that perseverance would accomplish much, and he knew that generally, life was long enough to perform much more than most men were disposed to undertake.

His vocabulary contained several thousand words—their pronunciation and definition. And his rule was, to mark from twenty to fifty of these as the task for the day; and these he committed to memory. If in his lesson words occurred which were not in common use, he marked them for more particular attention. No specific portion of the day was devoted to this labor; but whenever an opportunity presented, he took up the book and proceeded with his task. And whether much or little time offered, the work went on, and the business of the day was regularly accomplished.

It will scarcely be doubted, that perseverance in this course would, in time—and in a much shorter time than would at first be supposed—give the person pursuing it, both a very accurate knowledge of the meaning of words, and of their most approved pronunciation. The shades of difference too, between words nearly synonymous, would be

more distinctly marked and carried out in their use. And it must also furnish an almost inexhaustible fund for giving variety to phraseology, and strength to expression.

But there is reason to fear that, in most cases, committing a large number of words to memory, will be productive of stiffness, and pedantry, and ostentation. Not indeed, because the memory has been charged with them; but because they will commonly be chosen for their length, smoothness or peculiar beauty. Such words selected from a common dictionary, and strung together like beads, will be thrust forward for the purpose of display. They were committed, not with a view to enable the individual to converse more intelligibly, but for the sake of shining.

However true this may be in general, it was not so with Mr. Freeman. The unaffected modesty and discretion of his nature, triumphed over every possible tendency of this description. And no man was ever more free from the pomp of affected language, and the formal use of great words, cumbersome and multiplied adjectives, and studied expletives. It must have been perceived that his motives in storing his memory with words, were to qualify himself to discourse more intelligibly. He yet wanted words for all the valuable purposes of conversation; and the method which he took to obtain them, savored little of ostentation. He made no selections—he sought none for mere sound—but committed some thousands in the order in which he found them. Column after column, and page after page, were transferred to a memory which was susceptible of every impression that he chose to make upon it; and which seldom lost any thing it had once received.

Nor was this practice of storing his memory with words, their pronunciation and meaning, ever wholly laid aside. What had been undertaken from necessity, and continued from year to year from a growing perception of its utility;

was finally persevered in as a pleasurable exercise. And besides facilitating his other studies, by making him familiar with the meaning of a much greater number of words, it had an influence upon his progress in the English grammar. Nor were these attainments merely verbal. In their immediate application, they tended to the accumulation of a larger stock of ideas. For it is plain that he who reads a word, the meaning of which he does not understand, is deficient of the idea which that word was intended to convey. It is true that access to the dictionary will obviate the difficulty for the time being; but then the impression is exceedingly transient, and often in the hurry to finish a paragraph, the word is passed over without examination.

Though the method pursued by Mr. Freeman may by no means be necessary to the great majority of readers, it was undoubtedly best for him. Those who have enjoyed an acquaintance with books from childhood, can neither form an adequate conception of his particular wants, nor to any proper degree of comparison, be considered ignorant of their own language. But those who have not had access to books, or who like him, have neglected or misused the opportunities which they have enjoyed, would do well to adopt the same course, and commit to memory a certain number of words every day. In general, a much greater proportion of time is dissipated in gossip or sheer idleness, in which not a single useful or honorable acquisition is made, than he ever employed in becoming a well-informed man. And it is hazarding nothing to say, that every unlettered youth in our land spends more time uselessly, and worse than uselessly, than is required to obtain a respectable education.

Many may want the requisite taste for such improvements; but probably many more need only be put into the

path that leads to knowledge. But this should be done in season, and before the habits of inattention and idleness are matured. For, generally speaking, whatever distinguishes the youth, will characterize the man. And unless some particular circumstance shall prompt the effort, he who at twenty years of age has never read, will live and die without the knowledge of books. It is certain that the religious impressions made upon the mind of Mr. Freeman, and the fixed and strong desire to become a preacher of the Gospel, induced him to make those untiring efforts for the attainment of an education. But for these impressions and this inextinguishable desire to be useful, he had remained alike "unknowing and unknown." And the comparatively few men, who from ignorance and obscurity push their way to respectable acquirements and usefulness, constitute a standing proof that the great majority prefer their mental sloth and ignorance to the labor of acquisition.

It has been observed, that Mr. Freeman would appear to be occupied in reading several works on dissimilar subjects, at the same time—alternately giving his attention to each, without any special reference to the subject matter. This, as has been shown, was by no means the fact—he did attend most scrupulously to the choice of subjects. His original object seems to have been, to read a given amount in certain works; and then, to devote the remainder of his time to general and discursive reading. But he was led to carry on several studies in connexion, from circumstances over which he had no control: and he either possessed, or soon acquired the singular and enviable ability of withdrawing his attention from one subject, and fixing it, at pleasure, upon another. Most certainly this course would, with most persons, be exceedingly unproductive; as the last work read, would be the only one

which would make any lasting impression. Or, it would result in a general confusion of all the subjects read—the remembrance "of a mass of things, but nothing distinctly." But it was far otherwise with him—he literally devoured the contents of every book that he considered worthy of his attention. All of this description were equally well read; and all that was worth remembering, was certain to be preserved. For he did not satisfy himself with merely glancing over the pages of a book—nor always, with gathering the sentiments it contained; he frequently committed large portions to memory.

The inquiry will naturally suggest itself, whether Mr. Freeman possessed originally a very retentive memory; or some mnemonic art by which it was greatly improved. There was no particular indications of the former, and it is certain that until very late, he had not the least knowledge of the latter. And yet, it is believed that he possessed the only true, and useful, and practical principles of mnemonics—the simple power of giving equal attention, and his whole and undivided attention to every subject presented to his mind. Impression is the most effectual agent in memory. And every person will perceive, by reference to the subject, that whatever made a strong impression upon the mind or feelings at a given time, whether recent or remote, is distinctly remembered. In such cases, not only the leading facts, but the very minutia, all the circumstances of time, place or persons, are distinctly recollected. He, therefore, who would remember what he reads, has only to give his whole attention to the subject. At first this may be attended with some difficulty—other things may obtrude their unwelcome claims to consideration; but perseverance will confirm the habit of attention, and the object will finally be attained.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the labors thus undertaken and persevered in with untiring assiduity by Mr. Freeman, met with their appropriate reward. Never was it more true, that they who sow in tears may reap in joy. For without the ordinary means, with no more leisure than every mechanic can command, and which is thought too little commonly for recreation and rest, Mr. Freeman undertook the task of self-instruction; and in a very few years saw himself in the possession of a fund of information, of the very existence of which he had but an imperfect conception, at the commencement of his career. What a comment upon the employment of time, and the capabilities of man! What a lesson for the young mechanic, whose hours of relaxation are too often spent in low amusements or dissipation! What a pledge, that every endeavor to improve the mind and mend the heart, will be abundantly prospered!

Mr. Freeman never wrote—or rather wrote but very little. He labored under peculiar embarrassments in relation to writing—as he was left-handed. And having barely learned to write in boyhood, and giving no further attention to the subject until he commenced study, he found it a most perplexing business to wield a pen. He wrote slowly; and the labor was too great in his opinion, to render it an object of any further pursuit, than that of attaining a plain hand, and the capacity of transacting any necessary business that way. And these attainments he made—but seldom applied them, except when the occasion imperiously demanded. This accounts for the total absence of writings, from which any thing can be drawn respecting the character of his public labors, beyond what is treasured up in the memories of his friends.

The reader will wish to know by what possible process he prepared his discourses, without writing. By one as

simple as it was effectual. He first selected a subject on which he proposed to discourse; and then some passage of Scripture, which had an obvious bearing on his general plan, and which served as a motto. The particular propositions into which the subject naturally divided itself, were then settled, together with the leading arguments for their truth or propriety; then, his proof-texts were selected with great care, and their proper places fixed in his mind. The next step, while it marked his solicitude to perform every thing well, was one of great labor. He clothed his ideas in words—such as he intended to use—and revolving them over and over in his mind, actually committed the whole to memory. Yes, nearly the very words which he designed to employ in a given sermon, were almost as effectually impressed upon his memory, and were as certainly used, as if read from a manuscript. The only material variation of his procedure, was when, for the purpose of answering an objection, or showing the error of the common interpretation in a given case, or for enforcing the direct proofs in favor of the restitution, he followed the particulars suggested by the text. With every thing else, he proceeded in his usual manner.

This mode of procedure was laborious in the extreme; but it gave him much more time for reading, than could have been enjoyed, had he written his sermons. Besides, he could prepare his discourses in this way, when to write them would have been impossible. There was no time, no place, no occasion, in which he could not find more or less leisure to fit himself for the duties of the pulpit. At his own fireside, while surrounded by his family; in the houses of his parishioners and friends; in the stage-coach or the thronged cabin of the steam-boat; and even in his night vigils, the work went on with only an occasional interruption. Indeed, some of these appear to have been

particularly favorable to his plan; and he might be said to study his sermons, where other men scarcely appear to think, much less, to make any solid or useful attainments.

CHAPTER VI.

Commences the Ministry—His Opinions.

Sometime in the Summer of 1828, Mr. Freeman delivered his first sermon, in the Universalist chapel at Saratoga Springs. To one of his native diffidence, this must have been a most severe trial—as the congregation was almost wholly composed of persons with whom he had been long and familiarly acquainted. They had, however, long before this period, learned to respect both the man and his motives; and his own high sense of duty sustained him. This, his first effort was well received; and the matter of his discourse, as well as the manner in which it was delivered, gave ample assurance of his future success and usefulness.

On the eleventh day of September following, he received a letter of fellowship as a preacher of the "everlasting Gospel," from the Hudson River Association of Universalists, then convened at Troy, N. Y. Such letters are usually considered equivalent to what is called, a license to preach. They are, in fact, letters of recommendation, importing that the possessor sustains a good moral character and enjoys the confidence and fellowship of the body giving them. Reference is generally had in them, to the qualifications for the ministry of the person recommended.

During most of that and the following year, the public labors of Mr. Freeman were comparatively limited; and it is believed that he did not ordinarily preach more than one Sunday in each month. This was principally owing to his own choice—he considered himself as making preparations for the ministry, and did not think of devoting his time to the desk under several years. Nor did he wholly abandon his purpose of suspending his labors and fitting himself more effectually for their performance, until long after his whole time was occupied as a local preacher. And he always lamented the necessity which required him to preach so often, before he had completed what he deemed the requisite preparatory studies.

This determination and endeavor to bring a mass of respectable attainments to the work of the ministry, is not a little singular in a man who, it is well known, was most decidedly opposed to any, even the least ecclesiastical measure, having for its object the qualifications of ministers. No man could detest the officious interference of an ecclesiastical council in the affairs of individuals, more than Mr. Freeman. Hence his soul abhorred the act of legislating on ministerial qualifications. He loved the liberty of the Gospel—and he loved liberty of conscience, not only for himself and for his friends, but for all mankind. And while he fully appreciated the importance of theological knowledge, he would bind no man to make the attainments that he esteemed both necessary and useful.

It will be inferred that a man of the reflecting and investigating character of Mr. Freeman, would have no opinions and entertain no views, which were not emphatically his own. And this was eminently the case. He decided on no doctrine of religion by its claims to antiquity, or by the number and respectability of its professors—but by the testimony of the Scriptures. And what they taught to

his satisfaction, that only would he receive, and that would he openly avow and defend. That he might have been, and in some instances actually was influenced by his prepossessions to adopt some particular modifications of his opinions, is more than probable. Still, he was perhaps as free from this tendency as any other man. And it is believed that, in some instances of little moment, his fear of inclining to some particular opinion, actually prevented its adoption.

Mr. Freeman was strictly a Unitarian Universalist. The doctrine of the trinity was to him an unintelligible absurdity, alike inconsistent with the teachings of the Scriptures and the dictates of common sense. He therefore worshipped only one God, in one person. The doctrine of the tri-personality of the Deity he regarded as unfavorable to the devotions of mankind—distracting the worshipper with uncertainty respecting the proper person to whom he should address his adoration. Besides, he thought that the character of the Father suffered greatly, by the light in which it must be viewed on the trinitarian hypothesis. It destroyed his proper paternity, and with it the only legitimate foundation of the hopes and confidence of the heart.

Regarding the Deity as a Father—infinitely wise to know the wants of his creatures, almighty in power to provide for their rational gratification, and unchangeably benignant in the application of those means—he contemplated the social, intellectual and moral capacities of man, as so many indications of his goodness. The mission of Jesus, he considered as the purest and the highest pledge of the imperishable love of that Father; and the objects contemplated by the Gospel, as what nothing could purchase and nothing but the benevolence of God could bestow. Hence, in his devotions he came as a dependant

and wanting child, to an affectionate and provident parent. His thanksgivings were rendered, not with a view to secure benefactions in future, but because he was sensible of innumerable blessings already received. He poured out the measure of his supplications—not to win over the Eternal from his purpose—not to render the supplies of infinite beneficence more certain, or more abundant—but to utter his feelings and his wants, and to draw his spirit nearer to its God.

What his particular views were respecting the personal nature of Jesus, is not known. That he was not a humanitarian, is certain; but whether he believed him to be a superhuman, or a superangelic being, and the agent by whom all things were created, he never fully explained. However this may be, he considered Christ as entirely dependent upon his Father, as any other being in the universe. And he believed that his literal sufferings and death had no other influence on our salvation, than as a pattern of patience and submission to the divine will. And he viewed those sufferings in the light of *consequences* from his duties, instead of *causes* of our salvation.

The atonement, as it is denominated, he considered, not as a sacrifice offered to God for the purpose of making him more merciful; but as a system of reconciliation adapted to the condition of man. That from the darkness in which Heathenism had involved mankind, they had lost the knowledge of their duty, and consequently the power of performing it. That from these circumstances, the advent and labors of Christ became necessary for the purposes of instruction and example; and that those who received these instructions, became "reconciled to God"—or in other words, "received the atonement." He rejected with abhorrence the popular, but fulsome and offensive phraseology so common among Christians—such

as, the blood of God—the all-sufficient merits of Christ—turning away his Father's wrath, and their unnameable concomitants. And in his opinion, the false impressions inspired and cherished by this language, were from their supposed sacredness, the most difficult to eradicate from the human mind.

It will have been inferred, that Mr. Freeman rejected the doctrine of salvation from deserved punishment. That the sufferings of Jesus could, in any way, save mankind from the proper chastisement for their offences, was repugnant to all his ideas of justice or goodness. For as the guilty alone deserved punishment, he could never bring himself to believe that the sufferings of the innocent in their stead, were calculated to produce the best moral effects upon the world. Such sufferings, for all the purposes of reformation, must be nugatory. His mind instinctively revolted at the injustice, and even cruelty, of imputing sin to the innocent, or of inflicting punishment upon the unoffending for the crimes of others. He would ask, how can the Deity be supposed to act on these principles, when he has denounced against the sinner, and him alone, the proper and adequate punishment of his sins? Does not every one see that, if transgressors are not punished in their individual capacity, the threat to do so is wholly fallacious? God cannot remit the punishment of the wicked by transferring it to the innocent, without sacrificing his justice and violating his truth.

Hence, the common doctrine of forgiveness constituted no part of his creed. In his opinion, it consisted in placing the disobedient, at his reformation, on the same footing as if he had never transgressed—not remembering his offences. And he reckoned that system which supposes forgiveness to consist in the remission of punishment, among the most pernicious in its influence upon the

morals of mankind. When, therefore, an opponent of the doctrine of the restitution presumed to speak of it as of licentious tendency—he came down upon the popular view of forgivenes with overwhelming and irresistible power. He would, on such occasions, present the dark catalogue of enormities committed under the profession of the doctrine of remission of punishment; and make the objector feel the awkwardness of his situation, and the inexplicable difficulties involved in his creed.

Mr. Freeman was a believer in future limited punishment for all those who died in disobedience and unreconciliation to the will of God. He did not, however, suppose that such punishment consisted in any outward infliction. In other words—he believed that the guilty were not punished for being so, but that their guilt itself, was their punishment. And the sufferings thus induced would, in his opinion, be as lasting as the state or temper of mind which cherished them. To some, much longer than others; but that, in all cases, they would terminate before or at the resurrection. He did not think that the iniquities of this life were punished in another; nor that it was the act of transgression alone, that rendered the wicked deserving of correction; but the disposition and motive which prompted the action. Hence—that punishment commenced, not when the sin was committed, but at the moment when the intention entered the mind of the transgressor.

He indignantly repelled the insinuation that his views were either the offspring or kindred of the Popish doctrine of purgatory. And it must be admitted, that their affinity is not very obvious. The one supposes the punishment to be for actions performed in this life—the other, that it is the consequence of a state of mind with which we enter upon the future: one supposes the infliction

of actual pains by the instrumentality of some external agent—the other, that it is the natural consequence of unreconciliation, and wholly independent of any external circumstances: one maintains that the punishment is a kind of debt due to justice, and without any reference to its effect upon the sufferer—the other, that it is exclusively for his moral and effectual reformation.

But he laid very little stress on the immediate influence of opinions, the perceptible operation of which must be confined to another mode of existence, while they left every one to hope, that he himself should be exempted from punishment. He had seen that even the doctrine of endless misery was utterly insufficient to produce any important and substantial reformation. And on the contrary, he knew that many of the most upright moralists and sincere and devoted Christians, did not believe in any punishment after death. Hence, he regarded the assumption, that the doctrine of future punishment was particularly calculated to exert the most wholesome and salutary influence upon mankind, as equally arrogant and unsound. He placed his own hopes of the permanent reformation of the human race, on the direct influence—the immediate power of the truth and mercy of God through the Gospel. This was the great controlling power with him. This inspired his own heart with the love of virtue. And he naturally inferred that what had the strongest influence upon himself, would produce similar results upon others.

In his preaching, he urged those reasons for obedience which had been so efficacious in his own personal experience. And those who waited on his ministry for months, or even years, would never infer that he was a believer in the doctrine of future retribution. This was not because he took any precaution to conceal his views—for he would answer the question promptly when asked, but from a much

more important reason. He regarded his own speculative opinion on that subject, of too little moment to engross the attention of his hearers, while weightier matters required their consideration. He felt, that to make a man a Christian required the operation of a far different power from that of the belief or disbelief of the doctrine of future punishment; and that his salvation, of course, depended on other principles.

These considerations made him tolerant to those who differed from him. He felt no antipathies himself on account of his particular views on this subject, and it was matter of astonishment to him, that others could feel any. Many of his personal friends, both preachers and laymen, with whom he associated, and to whom he certainly showed the warmest attachment, disagreed with him respecting this doctrine. But that difference never once had a bearing upon his friendship. He claimed and exerted his own independence on all subjects, and he cheerfully conceded all that he asked.

No man could deplore the dissensions of Universalists on the doctrine of punishment, more than Mr. Freeman. And had all others possessed even a part of his catholicism, those dissensions had never existed. He did not doubt that those who were engaged in this strife, really had opinions on the subject; and that they attached great importance to them. This he knew was natural, especially under the irritations of controversy, which infallibly magnifies molehills into mountains. And he was accustomed to say that the uproar about future punishment was not only needless, but without apology—that he viewed every man who was disposed to push this subject, on whichever side, as a schismatic; more anxious to strengthen a party, than diligent to promote the influence of Christianity; and that, like family contentions, the nearer the

individuals approximated to each other in their general views, the more inveterate were their hostilities, and the more unyielding their determinations.

CHAPTER VII.

His Health—Business—Devotes Himself to the Ministry.

Repeated references have been made to the general health of Mr. Freeman. The natural—the almost unavoidable consequence of his continued and persevering labors, both bodily and mental, was an exceedingly nervous temperament. Three distinct causes were in constant and joint operation for his destruction—sedentary employment, intense mental application, and the want, or rather absence of regular and refreshing rest. Man was indeed made to be active, but he needs the invigorating influence of the open and unpolluted atmosphere—he was made susceptible of high intellectual culture, but it cannot be safely sought at the expense of necessary sleep. Nature, in these things, cannot be long abused with impunity. And the fatigued brain will admonish the too ardent student of the violence it has suffered, in refusing to be quiet and in exerting a most pertinacious nocturnal vigilance.

It was in this course of study and labor—in this state of impaired health—that the writer of this imperfect sketch first saw him in May, 1829. It was not medical aid, but the proper tone of nerves, now entirely unstrung, that he wanted. And could some skilful friend have drawn him from his books, and from his great mental exertions, into cheerful and mixed society, and free and

familiar conversation, it is believed we should not now have been called to mourn his early fall. That his laboring mind was subsequently often relieved in this way, many of his friends have witnessed; but the seeds of dissolution had been too long germinating—had been too long cherished, to be greatly retarded in their fatal progress. And we are led to appreciate his worth, by the recollection of the very means that conducted him to an early grave.

He was fully aware that his health was gradually declining; and in the Spring of this year he formed the resolution to change his business, presuming that to this alone was owing his indisposition. For it seems never once to have occurred to him, at this period, that mere study and mental exertion could produce the effects upon his constitution which he experienced; and in consequence, he continued his course with unremitted ardor. His new employments, however, occasionally drew him into greater activity of body—and in proportion, from his favorite pursuits. He was more occupied with the scenes of a diversified business—more associated with men; and of course felt some of the benefits of what might be called relaxation. For he had entered into partnership, opened a flour and fruit establishment at Saratoga Springs, and took upon himself the labor of making the purchases and providing the general stock of stores. His partner in the mean time superintended the business of the shop, and conducted the interior of the establishment.

This connexion was, from the first, marked with some rather singular, not to say whimsical features. The partners were both preachers—of views as dissimilar as were their general habits and characteristics. The one was a Universalist, the other a Methodist. The former vigilant, industrious and economical—the other easy, destitute of

any proper ideas of the nature of economy, and without a single trait that marks and distinguishes the man of business. But both were well-disposed—both confident of the truth of their own respective opinions, and each hoped to convince the other of the necessity of a change of views, to peace and happiness.

The connexion between these preachers furnished repeated opportunities for conversation on the points of difference between them; and they were always conducted in the spirit of mutual kindness. It was, however, suggested to Mr. Freeman, that Methodist preachers, when converted to Universalism had, with very few exceptions, been of no use to the denomination; and that it was hardly an object to obtain another, unless God, in mercy, should make him a better man. This he very frankly communicated to his partner; and the discussion of their honest differences of opinion was henceforth nearly or quite discontinued. The joke gave no real offence, and the business of the concern went on as usual. But as the undertaking was rather unproductive, though nothing was lost, it was abandoned at the close of the season.

It is an established maxim, that necessity is the parent of invention; and it is probably equally true, that feeble health is the nurse of expedients. And with a view to acquire strength, Mr. Freeman now adopted that of walking. He walked whenever and wherever his business called—and the distance or the state of travelling was scarcely taken into consideration. If his engagements or his professional duties led him from home, it was on foot—if the Summer sun poured down the flood of noon-day heat upon him, or the bleak and piercing winds of Winter threw the trophies of their power around him, he still walked. But instead of the benefit which was anxiously sought, and even anticipated, he discovered that the effort

was too great, and returned to the common mode of conveyance.

In September of this year, (1829,) Mr. Freeman emphatically commenced the work of the ministry. It was on a visit to Troy, New-York and Philadelphia, that his reluctance to assume the full duties of his profession, gave place to his sense of duty. And then only by his perception of its immediate necessity for the benefit of the great and good cause which was near his heart. He yet felt that he needed other literary attainments; and that he was not fully prepared, or properly qualified for the work. And he shrunk back at the hazard of throwing himself and his family for support, upon the precarious gratuities of a few scattered congregations. But when he saw the destitution of many of these, and heard the call for preachers reiterated from every quarter, he felt indeed that there was a wo upon him if he preached not the Gospel.

When at Troy, where he spent the Sunday on his way down the Hudson, an incident occurred that evidently hastened the period when he would devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry. Here he assisted in the introductory services both morning and afternoon; but could not be prevailed on to preach. He excused himself, on the ground that it was a city congregation, that he had seldom preached, and should not come up to the standard of their feelings and taste. In the morning, after much entreaty, he half-consented to preach in the afternoon; and in the afternoon, would prefer the evening; but at evening seemed only desirous of casting the burden from his own shoulders. But at this time, the Bible was put into his hands, and the hymn given out by the brother in the desk with him—who then deliberately walked down and took a seat in one of the pews, leaving him the alternative of delivering the discourse, or of disappointing the

congregation. For so decided a measure he was almost wholly unprepared; and it produced a moment of the most intense feeling. But during the singing, his extreme agitation partly subsided, and at the close, he rose slowly and gave out the text. The silence of death came over the congregation—every eye was fixed upon his pale features, as his half-suppressed voice tremblingly announced the propositions of his subject, and betrayed the agony of his feelings. He was embarrassed, but not overwhelmed—agitated, but not disconcerted. His voice became more firm; his words flowed more readily; and as he warmed with the subject, his fine blue eye kindled up with its wonted fire—he forgot his fears, and pressed home with fervor and visible effect, the moral bearings of truth, in an acceptable discourse. The victory was complete. He had conquered himself—and from that moment avowed the determination never again to decline taking his place in conducting the services of the sanctuary.

It was during this journey, and when at Philadelphia, that he first preached before an Association. And it is believed that the same opinion was formed respecting his pulpit talents, by every minister present on the occasion. Under the most distressing embarrassments inspired by his native diffidence, and the oppressive consciousness of his want of early cultivation, he poured forth the stream of his ideas in appropriate and strong terms of expression. His illustrations were familiar, his imagery glowing, well chosen and well-applied; and while it simplified his arguments, it almost forced upon his hearers the conviction of their propriety. And the tone of pious feeling which ever actuated him and which was breathed over his sermons, added greatly to their effect; and it was conceded that, if his discourses were neither the most profound nor splendid, they were eminently calculated to make his hearers sincere and devout Christians.

On his return, he visited New-York, and preached to the few friends and small congregation which had gathered around Mr. A. C. Thomas, at the Grand-street church. This congregation was principally composed of what may be denominated the *fragments* of several others, which had been successively exploded by the covert workings of infidelity. But though dispirited and feeble, they constituted the germ from which has since sprung several large and flourishing societies. It is believed that neither the talents nor worth of Mr. Freeman were appreciated by this society.

From this journey he derived several visible and important benefits. His health was considerably improved; and he had received so many, and such unequivocal assurances that his ministrations were acceptable, as to feel much encouraged. He had mastered his diffidence so far, as no longer to dread an absolute failure from that source; and he was enabled to form a more correct estimate of his own powers. Besides these considerations, there were several others that attached to him, which were not immediately perceived. He had become more known, and favorably known to a much larger circle of friends; many of whom had become much interested in him, and threw around him the benefits of their influence. They saw in him a powerful intellect—a lofty and manly spirit, borne down and oppressed by the weight of accidental circumstances, and struggling for emancipation. Though in the cradle of his ministerial career, they saw the moral Hercules who would successfully wield the weapons of spiritual warfare, and lead them on to victory and peace.

Early in December he again visited New-York; and either by request, or on the suggestion of some friend, went over to Southold, on Long Island. Here he met with a few very warm and devoted friends, whose faith

and feelings might claim kindred with his own. And he remained some four or five weeks, "confirming the souls of the disciples," and preaching in several of the neighboring villages with great acceptance. Here, too, he met with a Mr. Miller, a Baptist preacher, who had for several years been a believer in the restitution, but who had never yet openly avowed his sentiments. True, he had not directly preached against them, nor intentionally uttered sentiments incompatible with his views of salvation; he had merely suppressed the truth. This course was utterly repugnant to all the moral feelings of Mr. Freeman. He contemned, from his very soul, the temporizing and unmanly spirit that could yield up its inalienable privileges, and make a voluntary sacrifice of the rights of conscience at the altar of prejudice. And his own example, and the inspiring influence of his reasoning, had the effect to unearth this man of peace, and bring him up more boldly to the work of righteousness, and to the help of the Lord.

Returning again to Saratoga, he supplied the desk of the Universalist society in that place, a part of the time; and devoted the residue to different places in the vicinity. Among these were Charlton, Clifton Park and Greenfield. At Charlton he was well sustained by the efforts of a few zealous and influential friends; and the word dispensed, in due time met with that reception which a good man would most fervently desire. The respectable society in that place received its first effectual impulse under his ministry; and his faithful labors will be long and gratefully remembered by many in that congregation. But his services were neither equally acceptable nor useful, in some other places. The society at Saratoga was small, and at this time labored under some particular embarrassments. He had not sufficient confidence in his own abili-

ty to raise it from its depression, which would enable him to put forth the same energies that he might under different circumstances. For he was here, most emphatically, a prophet in his own country. And though personally respected and beloved, he found it impossible to be extensively useful. Of this he was fully aware, and equally sensible that the pittance received for his labors both here and elsewhere in the vicinity, was by no means adequate to the support of his family. And he therefore considered himself at liberty to accept an invitation to settle with any society, to whom he could probably be more useful, and by whom he could be better sustained.

Mr. Freeman received ordination to the work of the ministry on the 12th of May, 1830, by the New-York State Convention of Universalists, then convened at Utica. He was but little known at the time, in that section of the State, except by a few preachers. But they had formed a proper estimate of his worth; and perhaps no man was ever more cordially welcomed to a participation of their labors, their sorrows and their joys, their conflicts and their triumphs, and to the holiest exercise of their Christian fellowship and affection. It was the visit at this meeting that probably determined his future location, and opened the door for the effectual and final success of his ever-improving ministry.

About the first of September, he again visited his friends at Southold, and spent a few weeks in stirring up their minds by way of remembrance. Of the nature and effects of his labors in that place, as well as the opinions which were entertained of him, we can perhaps give the best idea in the language of one of his hearers.*

"His meetings were well attended; and his preaching

* G. Wells, Esq.

gave universal satisfaction. He was a warm-hearted preacher, and appeared to impart to his audience a portion of the spirit by which he himself was actuated. Perhaps I cannot better describe his preaching, than by quoting the observation of a Presbyterian deacon. He said, that he did not think the Universalist preachers who had been here before, had done much harm; but he considered Mr. Freeman a very dangerous man, for every body spoke well of him."

Immediately on his return from Long Island, he received an invitation to a more extensive and appropriate field of labor. Mr. N. Stacy, who had for more than twenty years preached to the Universalist society in Hamilton, Madison county, N. Y., had removed to Western Pennsylvania, and had earnestly requested that society to obtain, if possible, the labors of Mr. Freeman. He was accordingly invited to visit them; which he did, early in October. After spending a few weeks and giving very general satisfaction, he received and accepted a formal call to settle in Hamilton. In the mean time the neighboring societies in Madison and Eaton were destitute of preaching. Both had suffered more or less from the worst of all causes that ever affect religious communities—the indiscretion of preachers, and their own unwarrantable neglect and apathy. And it was now arranged, that he should preach one Sunday in the month in each of those places.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of a more trying situation for a young—or rather, an inexperienced preacher, than that of succeeding an able and faithful servant, under whose ministrations the middle aged have grown grey, and the youth matured to manhood. Nor was this all—one-half of his labors at least, were to be performed where the moral feelings were in a state of death; and where a

cold and revolting indifference spread its desolating influence, and paralyzed the half-made efforts for the renewal of strength. Of all this he was fully sensible, and girded himself for the conflict with the deliberation and firmness of one resolved to perform his duty, whether it resulted in victory or defeat.

The acceptance which he had already found, and which had led to his present engagement, encouraged him to hope that, if he could not meet his own and the wishes of his friends, he might at least be useful; and though he might not fill, could still maintain the place of his predecessor. He was the more confirmed in this expectation, by considering that every man had his peculiar way and manner, as well as his distinguishing powers of mind. He knew too, that the subject was absolutely inexhaustible. And that as the minds of men were differently constituted, it might be his privilege to fall on a less beaten track; and thus, while his hearers were interested in the novelty of the way, their views might become more extensive. But in carrying these speculations into practice, it must not be supposed that he deviated in the least from his usual and onward course.

CHAPTER VIII.

His Settlement—Success—Style of Preaching.

About the time that arrangements were making for the settlement of Mr. Freeman in Hamilton, a circumstance occurred which, though trivial in itself, had yet an important bearing upon the success of his labors in that place. The famous Masonic excitement was then at its height, and several very worthy and respectable members of the society took a deep and decided interest in the subject. They could not think of listening to the discourses of a man who was a member of that fraternity; and they accordingly applied to him for the acknowledgement, or disavowal of his connexion with them. His prompt decision of character and presence of mind at this moment, saved both himself and the society much needless trouble. And he replied in substance, that he had been invited there, not for the purpose of lecturing on the subject of speculative Masonry, "but to preach the Gospel;" and as his duty did not necessarily involve the expression of his personal views of that subject, he should withhold an answer until convinced of the propriety of the question. The subject was instantly and finally dropped, and he was permitted to discharge the duties of a Gospel minister without further reference to his Masonic principles.

It was in January, 1831, that Mr. Freeman removed his family from Saratoga, and settled in Hamilton. Here he immediately entered upon the duties of his profession with full purpose of heart; and with a fixed determination to avoid making parochial visits, and to devote himself to study with renewed zeal. But how little the wisest know

of what they will do! How utterly incapable of making any certain calculations respecting the manner in which they will employ themselves! And never was this more fully illustrated than in this instance. He did not dissipate his time in making social visits—but he did not appropriate it to reading. And he did indeed study—but it was often, very often while facing the unpitying storm, or wending his way in weariness to the distant lecture, or to the house of mourning. For as no fellow-preacher was located in his vicinity, he was necessitated to perform an uncommon amount of labor. And supplying, as he did, several societies, the demand for his services was incessant.

The very natural desire of his friends and supporters to become more particularly acquainted with him, induced them to request an occasional lecture in the distant parts of the respective societies. He consented, and requests multiplied, until he found it necessary to attend one, two, and sometimes even three in a single week. All this was in some respects very agreeable, as well as desirable; because the lectures were exerting their proper and anticipated influence. But they made sad inroads upon the time which he greatly wanted for other purposes. Besides, a great number of believers in the restitution were scattered abroad, over a large district of country, who laid exclusive claim to his services on funeral occasions.

There are few persons who ever felt the need of the comforts of home, more than Mr. Freeman; or who yielded with more regret to the necessity that drew him from his family and his books. And the custom so generally prevalent among Universalists in the country, of having a *sermon* preached at the interment of the dead, was to him, especially, one of great inconvenience. Often did he ex-

press the wish, that if the sermon could not be dispensed with, it might be postponed to the Sabbath. He appreciated both the feelings of the mourners and the good that sometimes resulted from those services. He knew that thousands, at these afflictive times, heard the words of truth and consolation, who would seldom give their attendance at any other. Still, the sacrifice was to him immense; and he yielded up his own convictions of mere personal duty to himself, to the probability that he was, in this way, effecting the greater good among mankind.

It may well be considered a question of some moment, whether the custom of having a sermon preached at the burial of the dead, is the best that can be devised. The practice is certainly attended with some inconvenience to mourners, and with many and great ones to preachers. No man can, at all times, suitably prepare himself for these occasions. For a great proportion of those services is called for, under circumstances which do not admit of any other previous preparation, than what can be made while travelling to the place where they are to be performed. This must be considered as a very inadequate preparation—and the preacher is often regarded as having come short of his ability; when, in fact, he has done every thing but performed impossibilities. Besides, the frequent occurrence of these services, is no ordinary tax upon the time and labor of the preacher. He is frequently called to a distance—the fatigue of travelling and preaching unfits him for making the requisite preparations for the succeeding Sunday, and his hearers become sufferers in consequence.

Might not these inconveniences, and many others not here named, be obviated, by generally dispensing with the sermon on these occasions? Or at least, if the sermon is still required, by fixing on a time that shall better compor

with mutual convenience? The preacher would then come prepared for the services, and the mourners will be in a situation to receive useful and lasting impressions. The pungency of grief will not overwhelm them, nor the bustle and confusion of the funeral preparations distract them. The sermon will be better matured—better adapted; the afflicted will receive comfort, and community will be edified with the truth in its simplicity and its power.

The society in Hamilton had been nearly destitute of preaching for several months, with the exception of a few weeks; and it was for a time, uncertain whether any one could be obtained to supply their desk. And then again, it was doubtful, even could they procure a preacher, whether he would be able to sustain himself and keep up the congregation. These considerations bore with full weight upon the society, and were properly appreciated by the other sects in the vicinity. It was considered a favorable time to make an impression; and either to draw off some of its active supporters, or to win over those who took no very deep interest in the subject. It is not supposed that any concerted plan of operations existed; but the different leaders of the respective denominations pursued such measures as were judged most effectual for promoting their purposes.

Among these, a local preacher* of the Methodist denomination, took a leading, and certainly a very conspicuous part. He began to converse very earnestly and charitably with Universalists—sympathized with them, and regretted the existence of those prejudices which separated the members of different communions; and who would otherwise "coalesce, like kindred drops of water." He appointed meetings for the Sunday, and lectures on week-

* Mr. Graham.

day evenings; and Universalists were particularly invited to attend. Encomiums were lavished upon them for their acts of generosity and benevolence, and they were praised for their substantial morality. Great pains were taken to avoid giving offence in the sermons; and the exposition of texts and the doctrines advanced were made to correspond, as nearly as possible, with the views and sentiments of Universalists. They, in turn, flocked to his meetings—spoke of his increasing liberality, and entertained strong hopes that he would soon openly avow his belief of the restitution, as he was already believed to preach that doctrine. He, on the contrary, saw his measures thus far successful, and probably congratulated himself on the prospect of withdrawing a large number from the ranks of Universalism, to those of Methodism.

Such was the posture of affairs when Mr. Freeman settled in the society—and directly in that part of it, where these proceedings had been chiefly carried on. It remained, therefore, to win him, if possible, from a decided stand against these compromising measures. And to effect this, the minister called on him—proffered the courtesies of good neighborhood—disavowed all unkind feelings, and deprecated their too general prevalence among the preachers of different denominations; and finally intimated that after all, the difference was nearly nominal.

Members of the Universalist society hoped that nothing would take place to interrupt the growing harmony with the Methodists; and expressed their conviction, that if kind measures were pursued, they should soon gain over another preacher. Mr. Freeman was emphatically a man of peace; but he could not conceive the proposed course in any way calculated to promote permanent friendship. He was unwilling either to disoblige his friends, or to

encourage measures which he foresaw must terminate in disappointment, if not in regret. He had no confidence in these pretensions; and believed that his friends were the dupes of a deep-laid system of policy, and which had already been too successful. He would rejoice in the reciprocation of every kind office with the members of all Christian sects; but he would not purchase their charity by the suppression of his feelings, or the compromise of his creed.

He accordingly took measures to ascertain how far facts justified appearances. For he knew that it was impossible for any man to preach both Methodism and Universalism, and long retain his standing and reputation for integrity, with either sect. And that without the understanding of an implied permission to preach the latter, would be to incur the odium of the former. He felt that the occasion could not require or justify disguise—and that the man who could preach Universalism, and have it understood to be such, could give no sufficient reason for withholding its public and open profession. And he embraced an opportunity of putting the question in such terms as to require a definite answer. The answer was what he expected—the man who had taken unwearied pains to accommodate his sermons to the taste and the views of Universalists, was a believer in endless punishment, and neither more nor less than a Methodist. It was the touch of Ithuriel's spear—the man of policy stood rebuked, and the charm of professed liberality was dissolved in a moment.

A train of circumstances had long been in operation, to throw a torpor over the societies to which Mr. Freeman ministered. But they were precisely of that kind as to allay any apprehension of their unavoidable tendency. As early as 1817, a very strong religious excitement com-

menced in Hamilton. The usual multiplication of meetings for mutual conference, prayer and exhortation followed, and in a short time some sixty or seventy persons were added to the communion of the church in that place. All the common indications of intense feeling, of a deep and pervading interest in religion, were exhibited. It was the subject of meditation—the theme of conversation with the whole community, and seemed to engross the attention of every mind. There is no subject on which the sympathies of the human heart so readily kindle into flame, as on that of religion; and no contagion spreads so rapidly as that of excited feeling. The excitement spread far and wide, and kindred societies soon partook largely of its influence. In the progress of a few years this unusual warmth of feeling subsided; and the natural consequences followed, in a state of extreme coldness and indifference. This depression had fully attained its legitimate limit when Mr. Freeman settled in Hamilton.

The influence of his peculiar manner of preaching was soon felt over every part of the region in which he ministered. The lukewarm members of society, who had lingered for years in the ranks of profession, awoke, as from a dream; and wondered at the lethargy which had spell-bound their faculties. The cold and indifferent were warmed into life and activity, and once more became sensible that so great and glorious a theme as that of boundless mercy and endless blessedness could interest the feelings and the heart. The fearless and open enemy of Partialism, who attached himself to liberal men, not because he loved their opinions, but because he hated those of other men—grew impatient under the message of charity to those whom he would see crushed with millstone arguments; and was then subdued to pity and won to reverence by the benignant spirit of the Gospel. The

most inveterate opposer of the doctrine of illimitable grace was softened into charity, and for once, felt himself constrained to acknowledge, that even a minister of Universalism might be a good man and a Christian. And the youth attached themselves to him as a social friend; hung upon his words in rapture, and sought and embraced the testimony of eternal truth.

The general attachment of the youth to the true Gospel, and their spirited and uniform attendance on its ministration, may doubtless be considered the most important advance in the progress of a religious society. But in this instance, it was by no means the highest evidence of the particular power of Mr. Freeman's ministry. The man who, by the energy of his personal influence, his daily conduct and public performances, can bring up the men of grey hairs from a state of indifference, and who can inspire the spiritually dead with the principles of moral life, is no ordinary man. He must be considered as possessing powers and talents of a peculiar order. All this was done—and most effectually done—in a few months in Hamilton. To use an expression of Mr. Freeman, "the tide of moral misrule and death was rolled back;" and a warmer and more heartfelt devotion inspired. The society increased in power and in the number of its worshipping congregation; while that in Madison, after having suffered a variety of reverses and disappointments, resumed its strength and its place among the most respectable societies of the denomination.

The great power of Mr. Freeman was the obvious result of the combination of the following, among many other characteristics. An air of sincerity and unaffected piety which pervaded his sermons—his plain and practical common sense, that marked every thing that he said—the becoming zeal which warmed him while he preached,

and the manly and commanding tone with which he uttered his sentiments. Sometimes, too, he came down upon the hearer in a voice of thunder, and shook the foundations of the soul with some tremendous truth. Indeed, so effectual were his resources, that the obstinacy of the most inveterate opposer melted away under his preaching, like wax before the fire: the good determined to do better; and the wicked resolved to reform, or fled from the keen glance of his eye and the terror of his rebuke. Instances might be multiplied to illustrate these remarks—a few, however, will be sufficient.

On a certain occasion where he was to deliver a lecture, a person distinguished for dislike and contempt of Universalism, took a seat directly before him, for the purpose of intimidating and embarrassing him, with a bold front, and a fixed and determined look. He proceeded some time without observing the formal preparation and attitude of defiance, so manifestly arranged in his presence. But immediately on making the discovery, he bent a withering look on the self-confident bigot, uttering at the same time one of his tremendous apostrophes to the conscience and the heart. It was enough—not to say, more than enough; the object of his rebuke was completely overwhelmed with terror, compunction and shame, and burst into tears. Obstinacy gave place to humility, and contempt was succeeded by veneration.

At another time, he observed at one of his appointments, several men, whose appearance indicated a dissolute life, particularly officious in seating the congregation, and in other respects unnecessarily forward and assuming. He availed himself, therefore, of the first convenient opportunity to ascertain their true character. And finding it what he suspected, he suggested to a friend that it would be impossible for the doctrine of the restitution to prosper,

while such men took so prominent a part in its promotion. That for himself, he had come to the determination to render them less conspicuous, or induce them to leave the meeting—or else, give such unqualified offence that his services would no longer be desired. He took his measures accordingly, and laid down such principles of moral action, and denounced the just judgment of Heaven against the transgressor with such irresistible effect—at the same time, painting, in such vivid colors, the disgusting appearance and deformity of vice—that they abandoned his meetings.

In the style and delivery of his sermons, Mr. Freeman neither imitated nor copied any man; but in both these respects, they were entirely his own. He despised the tricks of religious policy, and flung from him, with abhorrence, the implements of ghostly craft. And he was fully aware, that to be himself, and to act like himself, would sufficiently mark his course as a public speaker. It was therefore but to follow the directions of his own mind, and new channels of thought would be opened, and new motives to exertion and obedience inspired by his ministrations. And all who ever heard him preach, will bear witness to this distinctive character which always marked his sermons. There was nothing far-fetched and unnatural in them; and yet they bore the marks of a peculiar originality which rendered them both new and interesting, and by which they stood apart from the productions of every other mind. They were not remarkable for an orderly and systematic arrangement; but were characterized by great simplicity. At times, he would omit some prominent particular, because it would render the discourse too long—at others, he would introduce incidental matter, for the purpose of impressing more forcibly some important sentiment growing out of his subject. In his intro-

ductory remarks, which were commonly very brief, he had the appearance of struggling to fix the arrangement of his ideas; for he then spoke slow, with some degree of hesitation, and to a close observer betrayed some little embarrassment. His voice which was peculiarly heavy, strong and clear, would generally at that time indicate a slight tremor; and by a stranger might be easily mistaken for one deficient both in strength and harmony. But as he entered upon the subject, he appeared to forget every thing else. His utterance became clear, distinct, and in general rapid; and his voice firm, flexible and harmonious.

As he became warm, which he invariably did, he would step back as if to gather up his strength, and then pushing himself forward, and at times leaning over the pulpit, he poured forth the torrent of his ideas with astonishing fervor and never-failing power. Occasionally, too, he spoke with great slowness and deliberation—the words fell separately and distinctly, reminding one of the first heavy rain-drops that usher in the shower. At such moments he seemed to throw around him an awful and pervading stillness; and the congregation became involuntarily hushed into a perfect and breathless silence. These were the times when his hearers thought and felt, and the big tear would roll down the manly cheek, undetected by him who let it fall. As the storm rises from its intervals of quiet, and seems to accumulate new strength from the momentary calm, so he broke upon the stillness with some thrilling apostrophe, or with an appropriate and impressive appeal to the feelings and the understanding, in thundering tones. And as the sentence closed upon the ear—while expectation was most alive and ardent—the audible *amen* told the wondering listener that the sermon was at an end.

His discourses were in general, short, but commonly

much longer than his hearers supposed. For the attention of the congregation was so entirely absorbed as to exclude any "note of time." But in effecting this, there was no manœuvering—no finesse and affectation. His power was not obtained by the tricks and refinements of art. All that he said and did was inspired by the purity of unsophisticated nature. He was never compelled to lash his own sensibility, in order to evince warmth and zeal; nor to repeat long and prolix stories in order to awaken the sympathies of his auditory. His narration was always sententious—his appeals to the passions were the spontaneous growth of his train of thought and reasoning; and his own sensitive nature diffused over every part of his congregation a kindred fervor.

While speaking, he was constantly in motion—seemingly unconscious of the different movements and attitudes which he assumed. None of his gestures, however, was particularly offensive or disgusting. A critic would perhaps think that he acted too much; and probably he would have thought so, had he thought at all on the subject. His motions were generally graceful and easy. He did indeed raise his hands uncommonly high, but they never had the appearance of being drawn by a pulley, rather than raised by their proper muscular power. Some of his motions were likewise very rapid, but they were in perfect character—for he performed almost every thing in much less time than most other men. The only important exception to his gestures, was, that they were made principally with the left hand. And it will probably be forever impossible to reconcile that fact with our ideas of good taste and propriety.

Finally, his whole character and power as a preacher, is most truly and ably delineated in the brief notice of his death, written by Rev. D. Skinner, which appeared in the

Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate, of October 26, 1833. "Possessing a fruitful imagination, a warm and philanthropic heart, a retentive memory and a strong mind, he succeeded in the ministry beyond all the expectations of his most sanguine friends. Of all subjects, to him the love of God was most dear, the most inspiring. Here he seemed to be in his element, and to be divinely inspired with more than mortal energy and eloquence. Without saying aught to the disparagement of our many excellent preachers, we must be allowed to say, that of all the preachers we ever heard, Br. Freeman seemed to hold the most perfect command over his hearers—the effect of his sermons seemed absolutely electrical—the whole audience as one soul, seemed rapt in ecstacy, and lifted from earth to heaven by the thrilling and overwhelming power of his eloquence and devotion. Under his preaching, the hearer could never measure time—and a sermon of half an hour, would seem less than five minutes long."

CHAPTER IX.

His Reading—Its Results—Value as a Preacher.

It must not be inferred, from what has been said respecting the almost continued desk labors of Mr. Freeman, that he had abandoned his books. He still read, but much less than he intended; and less by far, than he had been accustomed to read. He had also discovered that his intense application induced an affection of the nerves in general, and of the head in particular, which disqualified him for long continued study. Still he gleaned from time to time, some of the fruits that he thought most deserving of his labor, or which were most congenial with his taste. His selection of books was now made with peculiar care—for as he could read but little, on account of his multiplied duties and the state of his health; he was extremely desirous that it should be such works as would be most useful. But he still felt a strong predilection for works of a devotional character; and he continued to feed and replenish his religious propensities from these sources. And he would say—that after all his love of intellectual improvement—his great anxiety to acquire substantial information—he never derived such pure and lasting satisfaction from any kind of reading, as from that which gave him the most exalted views of the Deity, and of the wonders of his moral providence. That from the perusal of these, he always rose with better feelings and holier resolutions; and that he could not repress his conviction that the diffusion of this spirit would have a far happier effect, and render his ministry immeasurably more interesting and useful, than he could ever hope

it could become by the highest attainments of science, or the most profound deductions of cultivated intellect. How well he sustained these views, his unbounded success and his great and acknowledged usefulness, leave us no room to doubt. He diffused a moral health around him, and won the heart to the love of virtue by inspiring it with the reverence of, and devotion to the Deity.

Among the few works that he read with the highest satisfaction, the treatise on the "Divine Government," by T. Southwood Smith, stood pre-eminent. Its subject and its spirit were entirely congenial with his own general views and feelings—he hung upon its pages with indescribable rapture, and imbibed the holiest feelings, which its developments of the paternity of God are so eminently calculated to inspire and cherish. His heart overflowed with gratitude while he contemplated the results of that all-providing benevolence, which with infinite condescension, adapts itself to the wants of the smallest and the lowest of the creation, with the same inexhaustible kindness that pours down the ample measure of enjoyment on social and intellectual man. These results—and these alone, satisfied his desires for happiness. The unlimited and unending good of all the human race, left nothing more to wish. And he saw in the present state of existence—in its weaknesses and its cares—in its sufferings and its sorrows, only a series of disciplinary arrangements converging to one grand and desirable termination—the felicity and glory of the moral universe.

For the same general reason—the augmentation of his conceptions of the Deity, with some additional objects—he read works which treated on Natural Theology, and and the Evidences of Christianity. He was particularly pleased with the familiar and convincing manner in which the distinguished Bishop Berkley managed the proofs of

a divine interposition, in his work entitled, the "Minute Philosopher." This he considered the more valuable from the fact, that it is among the first works, professedly written with a view to meet the skepticism of modern times; and as being the basis of many others, in which little more is done than to ramify and enforce the principles and arguments there advanced. Besides, it was prized by him for its graphic description of a class of unbelievers who have figured largely in this country, for the last few years—it was a likeness for which other men sat, and should immortalize the painter.

Among the works of this class, those of Paley, and especially Dick's Christian Philosopher held a conspicuous place. This latter work had peculiar claims to his consideration. For while it aided his conceptions of the grandeur of God, it furnished some of the most stupendous and comprehensive proofs of his being and perfections. To contemplate unnumbered worlds "wheeling their everlasting courses" through immeasurable space—to witness the operation of the laws of undeviating order, which bind, and regulate, and sustain their movements; and to feel that these laws were planned and enforced by an all-comprehending mind, filled his soul with admiration and devout praise. The thought that man—that himself—was a part of this great whole, and subject in many respects to the same laws; while in others, he was under higher influences and destined to incalculably higher attainments, gave him unspeakable joy. Here, he saw—what he devoutly wished all to see—the unfailing pledge of individual security, both for time and for eternity. Nothing could be overlooked or forgotten, where each particular constituted a necessary part of the amazing whole.

He had other and important reasons for this kind of reading. The ground of controversy was, in his estima-

tion, entirely changed; and the great conflict was no longer to be with doctrines which were evidently sinking with their own weight; but with an insidious and widespread skepticism. He knew that great and unwearied pains were taken by the master-spirits of infidelity, to infuse their own principles into the minds of the rising generation, by corrupting the fountains of education. And he witnessed too many indications of the success with which their efforts had been attended. He saw the unsuspecting youth betrayed by the plausibility of half-suppressed insinuations, into disrespect for the seriousness of devotion; and cavilling against the doctrine of the resurrection. To be able to lay before the young mind those great and convincing arguments which should awaken it from its delusive and uneasy dream of doubt—to call back the wanderer from his estrangement; and to inspire the rational conviction of the existence and attributes of the Deity, and the exercise of a calm, confiding, comforting faith in his moral government and grace, was in his view, an object worthy of the highest consideration. And he felt assured, that when the evidences of design which throng around us, were brought before the mind, it could not resist the conclusion, that a superintending intellect had planned and arranged the whole; and that the multiplied facts attesting the credibility of the Gospel history, must, when duly considered, induce belief in the mission of Christ and the immortality of the soul.

But it was the Bible that he studied with the most persevering industry. To him the Bible was the treasure-house of knowledge, as well as of truth. And convinced as he was, of the necessity of general information, and especially of that which related to theology, he never for a moment lost sight of the supreme importance of a familiar acquaintance with the language of the Bible.

Whatever else was done or omitted—nothing was ever suffered materially to interfere with this. And though it must be supposed that preachers generally study the Bible more than most other men; it is not presuming much to say, that few even of that class, ever applied themselves to the Scriptures with more faithfulness, or derived greater improvement and satisfaction from their examination. His uncommon familiarity with the language of the Bible, was the result of repeated and patient perusals, and the most careful study of its doctrines and precepts. Here he found incitements to virtuous effort—a remedy for every moral malady—comfort in his afflictions, and truths that stripped the grave of its covering of darkness, and eternity of its terrors. Here, too, was laid up the inexhaustible fund on which he drew for instruction, reproof, encouragement and consolation; and which he could apply almost without an effort, to the diversified condition of suffering man.

With the doctrinal views of the various sects—and especially those in this country—he was at great pains to become acquainted. He read their works, studied their confessions of faith, catechisms and creeds, and whenever an opportunity offered, attended their religious meetings. A variety of reasons induced this course. He wished to be able to give *reasons* for the rejection of certain opinions, as well as *for* those which he maintained. And if at any time he should be compelled to defend his views, it was desirable to know both the ground of controversy, and the nature of the arguments against which he should have to contend. Besides these considerations, he wished to promote the spirit of charity, and to convince opposers that he entertained no errors which he was unwilling to see exposed.

We scarcely need observe, that this is a species of

liberality which it is very desirable should be more generally practiced, as well as approved. In too many instances there is a manifest and repulsive prejudice against the opinions entertained by all those who differ from ourselves. Much unkindness and many bitter and cruel persecutions have been the consequence. And the most successful effort of bigotry, for the perpetuation of its own intolerant spirit and the preservation of its dogmas, is in the estrangement of its votaries from any correct knowledge of the persons and opinions of all other men.

Several important results followed from his very intimate acquaintance with the works named in this section; and especially from his familiarity with the language of the Bible. For though he did not generally crowd his sermons with quotations, his proof-texts were applied with uncommon ease, and with great propriety. And he could at pleasure—and always did when the occasion demanded—embody an immense number in support of the doctrine of the restitution; and would show from their respective connexions, their immediate or remote bearing upon the subject. To all those passages which could in any way be regarded as favoring the doctrine of endless punishment, he had given particular attention. And having tried the separate and combined power of these, before he embraced the doctrine of universal salvation; he was, of course, well prepared to meet any and every objection which could be urged upon their authority. There was an interesting kindness exhibited by him, while answering the objections of inquirers—for he would frequently furnish them with texts of which they never would have thought, and then proceed to show their meaning.

Though no controversialist, he was always in perfect readiness for the assault of any opposer of his cherished opinions. And his biblical knowledge—his correct ac-

quaintance with the doctrines of the different sects, and his familiarity with the most important evidences of the Christian system, rendered him a formidable antagonist to nearly every class and grade of the enemies of truth. But his armor was worn only as the means of defence, and his polemical skill was seldom tested except in refuting the captious objections of the querulous, or in answering the sober inquiries of the candid. As there was nothing repulsive in his appearance or assuming in his demeanor, he was sometimes assailed with great confidence as one who might be easily overawed, if he could not be convinced of error. And it was amusing to witness the chagrin of the crest-fallen bravado, who had too late learned that he had entirely mistaken his man, and had been foolishly battering his weapons against a rock.

Mr. Freeman was early accustomed to systematize and mature his views. His reading, therefore, was not a confused and indistinct mass that accumulated upon him without order, and without reference to an object. It was, so to speak, parcelled out into separate portions, of which he knew at thought the particular bearings and use. In this respect, many diligent readers are extremely deficient, and in no instance more so, than in reference to the Bible and their general views of religion. We recollect an instance illustrating his great superiority in this respect, while yet he had scarcely commenced his ministry; and which will serve to show, especially to young preachers, the vast importance of reducing their general ideas to an orderly arrangement.

Several ministering brethren were boarding with Mr. Freeman, at Saratoga, with whom he was accustomed to argue at times as an opponent; for the purpose of ascertaining both their talents and their ability to meet at once, any emergency. At this time he proposed the subject of

forgiveness—objecting, for the sake of argument, to the views entertained by Universalists respecting its exercise. The youngest preacher present, who was a man of fine talents and had preached much more than himself, undertook the defence, and was most effectually silenced in a few minutes. Never was the triumph of order over confusion more complete—and never could an argument be more palpably lost, for want of definite and systematic views. For had any thing like an equality existed, on the score of well matured and definite ideas; instead of losing, he must inevitably have obtained the argument. And mortifying as it must have been to the person so suddenly and so unexpectedly baffled, it was no doubt of great use to him; as it may have prevented a recurrence of the transaction with an opponent more in earnest.

Mr. Freeman was not only much esteemed, but was considered one of the most valuable ministers of the denomination to which he belonged. Both his preaching and example tended to the advancement of the doctrine which he professed, and especially to the promotion of the sound practical morality which it cherishes. He considered an appointment as a sacred pledge, and was punctual to the extent of his ability in its fulfilment. For he was aware that few things contributed more to the permanency and increase of a congregation, than the confidence that the preacher would attend his appointments. On the contrary it was evident, that a few unnecessary or unexplained failures on his part, would infallibly diminish the number of hearers. And he foresaw that, in the ratio of his personal fidelity, the probable progress of the knowledge of the truth within the field of his ministry, must be estimated. His faithfulness gave him more hearers—more persons became in consequence acquainted with the truth, and the sphere of his usefulness was proportionally enlarged.

Among the many objects of detestation in this wicked world, none was held in greater abhorrence by him, than an immoral Universalist. And while he was willing to make all possible allowance for the infancy of societies, and the imperfect knowledge which many might have obtained of the moral bearings of those great truths which have for their object the peace and happiness of the human race, he reprobated in no measured terms the remissness of evil doers. Nor was it enough, in his estimation, that they were as virtuous as the members of other sects—they were bound to be more so; and as much better as their views were more exalted. They professed a system of religion which presented the character of the Deity in the most amiable and endearing light—and could they be indifferent to his worship! Could those who had reasons for loving God to which other men were strangers, neither feel nor evince a sense of their obligation! Could men who found new and multiplied reasons for the affectionate discharge of every social and relative duty to their fellow-race, measure their obedience and their philanthropy by the common standard!

On these subjects he placed great importance, and on them of course, he delighted to dwell—to portray the exuberant goodness of God, and if possible thereby to win mankind to love him, in order that they might serve him with cheerfulness—to point out the diversified bonds that bind man to man—to trace the successive enlargements of the circle of blessings and enjoyment which diffuses itself by acts of duty, benevolence and mercy—and to give notice of the unavoidable calamities that accompany transgression. And no man could be happier in the selection of means, calculated to bring down these subjects with force and effect, to the apprehension and feelings of his congregation. His hearers always understood him—al-

ways felt what was so evidently felt by himself, and went from the place of worship with new resolves to do their duty. And we hazard nothing in saying, that no one man has contributed more to raise the standard of morality and promote that growing devotionality so perceptible among Universalists, than Mr. Freeman.

Circumstances were, indeed, favorable to the advancement of the morality, and the augmentation of the devotional feelings of the denomination. The simple doctrine of the restitution had been previously and most faithfully preached, and its proofs were generally well understood. That morbid religious taste, which riots in the mere exposure of the unsoundness and the corrupting tendency of the doctrines, and of the malpractices which dishonor the members of opposing sects, had been abundantly gratified. It remained, therefore, that the tendency of the truth should be pointed out, and its influences be sought, not alone in skilful argumentation, but in the practical illustration of the principles which warmed the heart. But it remained that the effort should be made—that the impulse should be given, which was to modify anew the labors of the pulpit—which was to direct the affections to their legitimate objects—which was to transform the prevailing taste for the repetition of the proofs of the doctrine of illimitable grace, into the fervent desire of moral improvement. And it is due to the memory of Mr. Freeman, to say that he was among the first to propose, as well as one of the most efficient in promoting the needed work of reformation.

In the councils of the Associations, he was a good adviser; but the influence which he exerted was more felt, than seen. For he preferred generally to hear others debate, rather than bear any prominent part himself. But it must not be inferred from this fact, that he was either

indifferent or inactive. He frequently originated and suggested both measures and arguments, while his opinion was only publicly known by his vote. His cautious and investigating mind analyzed every subject, as far as practicable; and when satisfied, he promptly expressed his decision. He anticipated most of the subjects proposed for adoption—could find means for the discussion of all those that involved any obscurity or doubts of their propriety, and by a few questions, would elicit the utility and bearing of every measure. Thus with the humblest pretensions, without unnecessarily wasting time, and apparently giving only a careful attention to what was passing around him; he was actually rendering the most important services to the denomination, by guarding its interests with vigilance and devising the best means for the promotion of its prosperity.

CHAPTER X.

New field of Labor—Influence with the Youth.

At the commencement of 1832, Mr. Freeman changed in part, the scene of his labors. That portion of his time which had hitherto been appropriated to the society in Morrisville, (Eaton,) was now transferred to the adjoining town of Lebanon. His ministry in the former place had been very acceptable and useful, but had not been followed with so many visible indications of immediate benefit to the cause of truth, as he more particularly desired. This consideration alone would induce him, sooner than almost any other man, to withdraw his services and appropriate them else-

where. There were, however, other reasons which induced the change in the present instance. The certainty that the society could obtain other services if it wished; and the confident belief that he could be more useful in Lebanon, had among others, a predominating influence in his mind.

The society in the latter place had been recently organized, and though it comprized a considerable proportion of the wealthy and respectable inhabitants of the town; still, like all other communities whose opinions are little known, it was the object of much obloquy and dislike. To share reproach incurred without crime—to overcome evil with good—to subdue the avowed enemies of the most glorious system of religion by the all-conquering power of truth and virtue, were objects as congenial with the duties of his profession as with his feelings. He was already favorably known to the society—and so known and appreciated by other sects in the immediate vicinity, as to be the object of some apprehension.

Here, indeed, the good seed fell on a genial soil. The indifferent—of whom there are many every where—were as usual, induced by curiosity or to oblige a friend, to attend his meeting for once, and became strangely and strongly interested in the preaching and in the preacher. He was so much in earnest—enforced his arguments with such familiar, yet effectual and convincing illustrations—urged such motives for a life of patient industry and moral virtue, and made such overwhelming appeals to the judgment as well as the passions—that they would—they must hear again and again. Some bitter enemies of the system of unbounded grace were led by various causes to listen to his discourses—and even those who doubted whether any thing good or true could be either uttered or performed by a believer in universal salvation, were

eventually converted to the belief of that doctrine, and received the comforts of its hopes. The prejudices begotten and nourished by ignorance, fell like Dagon before the ark of the living God; and nearer approaches were made to the exercise of Christian charity, than usually marks the stinted and suspicious intercourse of the members of opposing sects. The youth, especially, attached themselves to the meetings—to the preacher—to the interests of the society; which might now be regarded as taking the first place among the respective denominations in the town. And a train of favorable events combined to give to this infant society a state of uncommon and permanent prosperity.

In the course of the Winter of 1832, the large and increasing society in Hamilton, which had not yet furnished itself with a meeting-house, became sensible of its great need of that accommodation. They possessed an abundance of resources which enabled them to erect, and sufficient numbers to fill, a spacious church. Measures were accordingly taken and the requisite materials obtained, for the accomplishment of this necessary object. Mr. Freeman took a very lively interest in this undertaking—aided its progress in every way compatible with his situation—and advised respecting the size of the contemplated building. But his inflexible modesty constrained him in this instance, to misjudge respecting their prospective wants. He could scarcely believe that under *his* ministry, their numbers would so rapidly increase, as to render a *large* church certainly necessary on ordinary occasions. And as neither the society nor himself desired any thing for the mere purpose of display—aiming only at the attainment of simple convenience, and acting under a system of rigid economy—their plan, when carried into execution, proved by far too limited for their actual and existing wants.

They erected a neat and convenient house—but by no means sufficient for the accommodation of the society from week to week. Motives mutually operated upon the society and upon him, in the production of this result. They wished to build at the least expense; and he, fearing that nothing would be done, if more was required, contented himself with what was done—as the least of two evils.

We have had occasion more than once, to refer to the attachment of the youth to Mr. Freeman and to his ministry. There certainly was something very peculiar in this attachment, and the consequent influence which he exerted among them, in the places where he ministered. It was not merely a few individuals from the families of his particular friends, and with whom he was more intimately acquainted—but almost the whole community of the youth—male and female, learned and unlearned, the rich and the poor. Those whose families were most inveterate in their hostility to his views, and who had in consequence formed no very favorable opinion of the man, partook of the common feeling and its attractive influence. Many of these embraced some convenient opportunity to hear him preach—imbibed the spirit of their associates—and *would*, and actually did continue to attend his meetings, in defiance of the remonstrances and even the prohibitions of their friends.

There was nothing in all his appearance, his habits or his conversation, from which to argue this result. And it certainly was not effected by any well-matured and preconcerted plan on his part. For he never, in any way, courted by special attentions, either their society or their attachment. He was neither very young, nor fashionable, nor particularly talkative and amusing; and of the ten thousand subjects of familiar and ordinary conversa-

tion, very few were ever named in his presence. It was not, therefore, because he entered into the discussion of such subjects, as are generally thought to be particularly agreeable to young people; for having mingled little in such society when in youth, he was necessarily unacquainted with them. Yet he somewhere touched a chord with a skilful hand, whose vibrations awakened the best affections of the young heart, and which rendered him almost the subject of idolatry. And among the hundred preachers of the "Empire State," not one ever obtained, or exerted any respectable part of his influence over the minds of the rising generation.

From these circumstances, we have been led to think it possible for mankind to underrate the taste and talents of the youth. And that it was perhaps too generally supposed, that they neither wished nor could enjoy any but the light and frivolous topics of conversation; unless, indeed, it related to subjects connected with business or education. And it is more than probable that one very important reason for this impression, is, that they have very generally shown a disrelish for religious subjects; and in proportion, shunned the society of ministers in a particular manner, as a class of men with whom they had no common sympathy. But when we reflect on the assumed distance which they have placed between themselves and the youth—on the repulsive and authoritative manner in which religion has been proposed—and that its visible influence tended rather to break down the spontaneous vivacity of their nature, than to awaken and cherish the frank and generous feelings of the heart—we shall cease to wonder that they have turned from the subject with disgust and disappointment.

It should be recollected then, that though Mr. Freeman made no special exertions to attach the youth—he did not

repel them by any coldness and distance of manner—nor discourage and disgust them with the inculcation of the revolting dogmas that freeze up the affections of the heart. He loved the youth—he loved the joyousness that inspires them—he loved the honest, open and confiding character that belongs to them—and he loved to see them innocent and happy. And it is probable that his practical common sense enabled him to appreciate more fully than most others, their feelings and capabilities. He met them without requiring them to put on the staid sobriety of other years—without frowning upon the aspirations of buoyant spirits—without expecting them to conform to his standard in all things—without forgetting what was due both to them and to himself—and was simply the discreet minister, and the cheerful and agreeable friend.

There is in the mental and moral worlds, as in the physical, a system of mutual action and reaction in constant operation. And it is no less instructive than amusing, to trace its occasional bearings and influences upon the relative circumstances and conduct of men. The popularity of Mr. Freeman with the youth, in the extensive region where he ministered, led to one rather novel result—he solemnized nearly all the *marriages* that occurred within that district. This brought him perpetually in contact with new circles of youth, and enlarged both his acquaintance and the sphere of his usefulness; at the same time that it rendered the demand for his services on similar occasions still more desirable and more certain. And it is safe to say, that he annually married more persons than all the ministers of all other denominations within ten miles around.

This fact illustrates in a singular manner, the reaction of the public mind. There had previously existed in his vicinity, as well as in most other places, a prejudice against

the celebration of marriage by a Universalist clergyman. Many deemed, or affected to suppose, the rite absolutely invalid, when performed by them; and many more probably, were at no small pains to render it unpopular. And as public feeling sometimes stamps the seal of infamy upon things really proper as well as legal, the time had scarcely passed when the services of a Universalist could be employed on such occasions without disgrace. That it should now become not only allowable, but popular—and that it should have been brought about in so short a period, is one, among a number of distinct evidences of the high reputation of Mr. Freeman, both with the youth and with the community. For it will be readily supposed, that it was not the youth alone who felt and actually took a deep and lively interest in this subject. Respectable families, whose liberal feelings and views would induce them to wish the services of a Universalist clergyman on those occasions, felt compelled to forego their prerogative, to avoid reproach. Instances without number could be produced, in which parents, as well as their children, have thus shrunk from the expression of their feelings and the exercise of their inalienable rights. And some distant connexion—some officious friend has been gratified at the expense of the honest desires of those most concerned.

That so general a revolution of public sentiment should have taken place in the short period of a year and a half, argues, not alone the fact—that the crisis had come, which was to place the profession of liberal Christianity upon a footing of equality at least with that of any other doctrine—it speaks a language that cannot be mistaken, respecting the mental endowments and moral character of the individual in whose favor it occurred. It informs us that he was not only without reproach himself, but that he divested his profession and the doctrine of which he was a min-

later, of the opprobrium with which it had been depressed. It informs us, that his high reputation was earned by a course of faithful and well-directed labors, sustained by an unimpeachable morality, and honored by the exertion of more than ordinary talents.

CHAPTER XI.

His Views of Ministerial Qualifications and a Theological Seminary.

At the time Mr. Freeman received the fellowship of the denomination, very little had been said respecting ministerial qualifications. The rules of procedure with candidates for the ministry, were exceedingly simple—comprising little more than inquiries respecting their moral character, and their ability or aptness to teach. If they had enjoyed the benefits of a respectable course of theological reading, it was hoped that their success would correspond with their advantages—and if they had not read, but appeared to be worthy in other respects, of encouragement, it was expected that they would exert themselves to acquire the necessary information. And though in the infancy of the order, the great want of preachers sometimes induced the Associations to grant letters of fellowship to persons who were extremely deficient in almost every species of intellectual culture; yet it was always presumed that they would improve, or that the public taste would decide what station was most suitable for them. This was occasionally attended with some inconvenience—but oftener resulted in the benefit of the

cause, and called into exercise the talents and usefulness of a much larger number of preachers.

Within a few years, however, a very important change had taken place in the state of the community. Science was by far more generally diffused—at least an elementary education was much more common; and more was consequently required in those who assumed to be teachers. Facilities for obtaining a respectable education were surprisingly multiplied; so that the public could scarcely believe that ignorance admitted of an apology in a preacher. In general, Universalists endeavored to keep pace with the spirit of the age; still nothing definite was undertaken by them. Associations continued to act at discretion—and gave or withheld fellowship almost independently of the literary or theological attainments of the candidate.

At length the Hudson River Association of Universalists, at its session in the Fall of 1832, took ground on this subject; and required in candidates for the ministry, an acquaintance with grammar, rhetoric and logic, the presentation before the examining committee, of an original essay on some doctrinal or moral subject, and at least six months study with some acknowledged minister of the order. This resolution became the subject of much discussion; and in some instances, of the most decided opposition—not because the requirements were unreasonable in themselves, but because it was feared that they might, in their operation, exclude some valuable men from the ministry. Apprehensions were also entertained by some, that it was establishing a principle, the results of which could not be too much deprecated.

Among the opposers of this measure, Mr. Freeman was one of the most decided. He was a member of the body by which it had been adopted; and though living at the

time, beyond its limits, he could not but feel a particular interest in its proceedings. His opposition, though firm, was not intemperate; and it was directed—not against the requirements themselves, but the act of making them obligatory. He had himself acquired more than was here specified, before asking fellowship; and he was desirous that every candidate should at least make equal, and even much greater attainments. But he could not bring himself to see the right of an ecclesiastical council to determine or prescribe how much a man should learn in order to qualify him for the ministry, or to render him useful in his calling.

It must be conceded that the examining committee does in all cases, legislate and decide on the moral character and general capacity of the candidate. Why, then, may they not with equal propriety, determine what literary qualifications are necessary—or what amount of theological knowledge he shall possess? The public is in either case deeply interested, and the reputation of the denomination is also involved. And though it is undoubtedly a less evil for an individual to attempt to preach, who is utterly ignorant of theological science and of his professional duties, than for any man to be immoral; still it is difficult to discover any important reason why the power that decides respecting the one, may not determine the other.

But it was not merely the act of legislating on this subject to which Mr. Freeman objected. He looked forward to the possible results to which it might ultimately tend. And he saw, or fancied that he saw, a successive train of encroachments upon the purity of the Gospel institutions, and upon the individual rights of Christians, founded on this single act, which would finally terminate, only in enabling a learned and politic clergy to prescribe both the

kind and the measure of faith, and to lord it over the heritage of their Master. While he also feared the eventual exclusion of the laity from the management of their own concerns, and their consequent subjection to the dictation of an aspiring priesthood.

He apprehended that, though the requirements in the first instance were moderate, leaving the ministry still accessible to the poor as well as to the rich, in process of time the requisite preparations would be so much increased, that unless an appeal was made to charity, none but the wealthy could aspire to their attainment. And he inferred that whenever such a time should arrive, the simplicity of the truth would be sacrificed at the shrine of professional interest; and that men wholly destitute of any love of the Gospel, and regardless of its influence and its power, would be thrust forward to fill the places of apostolical instructors, merely because they were technically qualified for their station, and wore the garb of the ministers of righteousness.

These apprehensions so far from being allayed, were greatly augmented by the further resolution of the same Association, at its next session, (1833,) recommending to the consideration of the New-York State Convention of Universalists, the subject of the establishment of a Theological Seminary. This was what he had anticipated—but it was not supposed that it would follow so soon. The benefits of such an institution could not in his opinion, be enjoyed by any except the rich, without descending to the various arts of beggary which had already disgraced the various denominations who had made the experiment. And then the project of conferring a liberal education and the highest professional accomplishments gratuitously, he regarded as the most direct means of corrupting and degrading the ministry. He felt, too, that few young men of

spirit and integrity could accept the proffered bribe, and that consequently, the stupid and the unprincipled would, almost alone, fill the places of the messengers of truth. And he considered this to have been to a great extent, the misfortune of those sects which had established similar institutions; and he most sincerely deprecated their possible existence among the prospective evils of his own denomination. That many of the mischiefs he anticipated have occurred, none can doubt; and that they actually exist to some extent in the sects around us, is too plain to need proof—but that they are the necessary consequence of an educated ministry, or theological seminaries, is at least, problematical.

To his apprehensions it was sometimes objected—that the ministry itself has been the subject of the greatest and most deplorable abuses; and yet that Universalists knew and appreciated its use and its importance. That no very obvious reason existed why the ministry is not as dangerous as the institution under consideration—and in fact, as dangerous *without*, as with a Theological Seminary. That the state of community was very different from what it had been; and that Universalists, as a denomination, differed greatly from all others. That they have never been in the practice of permitting the few to dictate to the many—have never entrusted their spiritual concerns to the management of the clergy, and have never received laws for the regulation of their conduct in the enactment of which they did not bear their proportionate influence. That no real danger can be apprehended from the ministry, because in nearly all their deliberative proceedings they are associated with an overwhelming majority of laymen, who are presumed to be capable of judging of their own interests. And that it may be presumed that these same laymen are fully competent to control for their

own good, a Theological Seminary and a course of theological instruction. That consequently, distrust of the integrity of purpose in any measure which they adopt, is not merely casting suspicion upon the ministers—it is in fact, a reflection upon the motives of the whole body of believers; and presuming, unintentionally no doubt, that they are incapable of governing themselves. That this is precisely what the clergy of some other sects have claimed, and who have taken upon themselves, in consequence, the whole labor of governing *for* their people—a fact that furnishes an obvious reason why abuses have occurred among them—a reason that never could have existed, had the people provided, as Universalists have done, for their own government.

It was further objected, that his apprehensions would appear to be groundless, on the principle of their relation to the rising generation. That it was scarcely possible to doubt, that the progress of the human mind was onward—at least, in this country; and if so, that no reason could be given, why the next generation would not be as capable, in all possible respects, of managing their own concerns, as the present. That their means of information on nearly every subject, would certainly be greatly superior to ours; and that it would probably be matter of wonder to them, that we abstained from benefiting ourselves, because we seemed to conjecture that they would always be children. And that if we had found means of protecting ourselves against the encroachments of spiritual wickedness—in defiance of our own early impressions, and under the very batteries which the labor of fifteen centuries had been devoted to render impregnable; we need not fear that our children will voluntarily shut their eyes to the light, and bow submissively to the machinations of religious usurpation.

These and other considerations in favor of a Theological Seminary, Mr. Freeman readily admitted had some weight; but still, the method, in his opinion, was entirely wrong, as far as it related to the improvement of the ministry. No man could be more desirous of raising the standard of ministerial acquirements, or of furnishing facilities for their attainment; but he could not submit to their being imposed as a duty. And believing that an institution expressly devoted to that purpose was both unnecessary and improper, he deliberately set about devising a plan which he fancied would meet the case, and be unexceptionable to all parties.

An extensive theological library was, in his opinion, a desideratum, without which, nothing of any importance could be effected. Whatever else was done, this must be a subject of the highest consideration; and one of the most important to the interests of the undertaking. And he presumed that every young man who wished to enter the ministry would, without compulsion, cheerfully avail himself of such a resource, if put within his reach. But he was aware that no single individual could be expected to furnish such a library—for he wished to see a collection which should comprise every thing necessary to the student; and of course, such an one as the denomination did not possess.

For the better accommodation of the order, he would have several such libraries—to procure which, he would concentrate the whole sum of means and efforts in the State of New-York for one; those of New-England for another; and so on, until every section of our country was provided with a suitable collection. In each district, he would appoint some resident preacher the libarian, who should be competent to direct the proper course of reading; but who should receive no other compensation for

his services, than the use of the books. In this case, the library would be the property of the denomination, and perpetually subject to its control. The librarian should be responsible for the care and preservation of the books; and the student at no other expense for their use, than that of making good all injuries which they might have sustained in his hands.

Such an establishment and arrangement would, in his opinion, be altogether preferable to any other, on account of the great economy of means which it embraced, as well as greater simplicity of character. The immense sum necessary to the erection of suitable buildings, and the salaries of officers, would be entirely saved to the community; and the tuition fees to the student. For he estimated that what would be requisite for the erection of the necessary buildings of the Seminary, in the first instance, would be amply sufficient to furnish a better library than can now be found in America, with some three or four exceptions. And the saving to the student would, in all cases, enable him to acquire the necessary information by a very little exertion, without descending to the mortifying and humiliating practice of deriving his maintainance and education from charity.

Another consideration of great weight with him, was, that by this arrangement the student would be exempted from that peculiar species of *drill*, which he esteemed destructive of the natural force and self-reliance of the mind, and of that indefinable power which the ministry was designed to exert. For he had observed that, in general, those preachers who refined much upon the composition of their sermons—who appeared particularly nice in the choice of words; or were very solicitous about the manner in which their discourses were delivered, were comparatively *powerless*. And that such preachers too often

sacrificed the sterling and native simplicity of truth—its charm and irresistible influence, on the altar of harmonious and well-turned periods, the music of cadence, and the fitness of gesticulation. For he felt assured that a private study under the regulations he proposed, would furnish few facilities for obtaining the mere refinements of a theological education. And that however accomplished the librarian might be as a speaker or scholar, he would possess little time to devote to the mere externals of the profession of his pupils. While they, on the other hand, would find few inducements to leave the pursuit of substantial knowledge, for the mere acquisition of the graces of oratory.

Let it not be said, that this plan of instruction evinces the antipathy of an envious disposition and an uncultivated mind, conscious of its own want of literary advantages, and jealous of the superior privileges of others. No man was ever more perfectly free from the littleness and the meanness of such a spirit. And we repeat again, that none more fervently desired to see the denomination favored with a well-informed and competent ministry. But he would not seek improvement at the monstrous expense of integrity of heart; nor refinement at the sacrifice of the power of the Gospel. He envied no man; and rejoiced in the prosperity—nay, even the popularity of his brethren; but he held in sovereign and irrepressible contempt, the affectation of greatness without the substantial qualifications and attainments which could secure the distinction. And his views on the subject of a Theological Seminary are useful, as they serve to show the purity of his principles—the originality of his thoughts—his love of religious liberty, and of what was intrinsically valuable, rather than what was fine, splendid or popular.

CHAPTER XII.

Miscellaneous Incidents.

From the time that Mr. Freeman became a member of the Universalist denomination, he took an uncommon interest in its annual Associations, and other general public meetings. In this he was actuated by motives like himself—rather peculiar; and in some respects, such as no other man realized. It was not alone because such meetings were necessary for the transaction of business, and to the good order and prosperity of the denomination—nor because his feelings caught the warming inspiration of favorable reports from different quarters of the common vineyard, of the organization of new, or accessions to old societies—nor because he formed new and interesting acquaintances; but because he *learned* something, and felt that they were seasons of moral and intellectual improvement. At these meetings especially, he indulged his favorite humor of studying character; and generally formed his estimates of its combinations and modifications with remarkable precision. Here, too, he learned to judge so very accurately of the value of the respective sermons—acquired a knowledge of the modes of transacting business, and was led to the consideration of the means best calculated to promote the knowledge of the truth, and of course, the happiness of mankind.

On these occasions he strictly adhered to the rule which he had long since adopted—to take that place and to perform those duties, to which he was appointed. And it was surprising to witness the self-command and self-sacrifice which he sometimes displayed—and the commanding and

powerful manner in which he frequently discoursed. The occasion produced precisely that species and degree of excitement which was exactly adapted to his mental wants. And when it was feared that he might fail, for want of mere bodily strength, or from some embarrassing circumstances, he would come down with thundering power and tremendous effect upon an astonished congregation.

An instance which fully illustrates this remark, and which will not soon be forgotten, occurred in the Fall of 1832, at the session of the Cayuga Association of Universalists, at Elbridge. He was at this time but little known west of the section of country in which he resided, except by the preachers. Here he arrived at a late hour for the services—having travelled in an open carriage, on that and the preceding day, more than fifty miles in the rain—and was required to enter the desk in *fifteen minutes*, and deliver a discourse. Intelligent strangers, to use their own expression, "saw him enter the pulpit, with extreme regret. He was pale, sickly and evidently much exhausted with his journey; and appeared so much embarrassed that nothing but disappointment could be expected." And yet, in five minutes the rustle of inquiry, Who is he? had entirely subsided—every eye was fixed on him, and no sound was heard, save the deep, mellow and flexible tones of his own voice—no motion seen, but the unconscious movements of the speaker. Never was a congregation more completely surprised—seldom ever was one more perfectly enraptured; and the only regret was—that he had not preached sixty instead of thirty minutes.

One distinguishing feature attached itself to his discourses, more especially on these occasions. No man could preach immediately after him and keep up the attention of the congregation. And wo to the unhappy son of misfortune, to whose lot it fell to deliver a second ser-

men, as is sometimes done in the Associations, without an intermission. A popular preacher—much more so than Mr. Freeman ever became—would in such case, see his laurels drooping and withering around him, like tender plants under the subduing blaze of a Summer noon; and neither personal respect for the preacher, nor the unwearied efforts of the hearers themselves to fix their attention, could ever secure more than a respectful silence. His sermon—his peculiar manner—his penetrating eye—his thrilling appeals, and his captivating imagery were all yet in their minds; every heart was full, and every faculty of the understanding was pre-occupied. And the intensity of feeling which had been excited was subsiding, and must go on to the full point of reaction before the attention could be successfully recalled. We forbear making references in this instance—as most of the preachers at least, who knew him, will recollect the illustrations—some with feelings of humility—others perhaps may smile.

Mr. Freeman would often say that he loved to preach. It was emphatically his life; and he appeared, while delivering his sermons, to be perfectly happy. Yet it was not the riotous joy of the enthusiast—but the warmth of moderately excited feelings, and the deliberate consciousness that he was performing his duty. While in the pulpit he seemed to forget nearly every thing but his subject, and his measure of rational joy was completely full. But in the overflowings of his feelings he was never led into extravagances—nor did the fervor of his zeal ever degenerate into fanatical rant. His head was clear—his arguments conclusive—his subject always comprehended, and his words well chosen. And we cannot refrain from contrasting the joy of his feelings, which beamed from his expressive countenance while in the desk, with that sickly affectation of an imperious duty to minister at the altar,

contrary to all the desires and wishes of the heart, which so many preachers profess. In the ordinary concerns of life, we scarcely hope for the success of any man in that pursuit for which he has no relish—why should it be otherwise in affairs of religion? Will it be pretended that our faithfulness in the Gospel, is to be estimated by our disgust at the service, and our piety measured by the depth of our mortification while in the performance of our duty? This may indeed be pretended—but the pretence is not worth refutation. It was to far different feelings and desires that Mr. Freeman owed both his ministerial profession, and the success of his labors.

In the Spring of 1833, Mr. Freeman visited some connexions near Oswego, N. Y., who were members of the Methodist connexion. As he was about entering the house, he was informed that they were at the time honored with the company of Mr. P——, one of their own ministers—and he was entreated to have no controversy with him. To this he consented; and was immediately introduced to the clergyman, with whom it was understood a similar arrangement had been made. The evening wore away very pleasantly—the conversation was free and friendly, and no particular reference was made to the different opinions of the members of the party, until late—when Mr. P—— observed that he had conversed with several Universalist ministers, and could silence any of them in a few minutes. To this Mr. Freeman made no reply at the time, feeling himself bound for the evening by the pledge not to have any controversy.

In the morning he took an early opportunity to call up the subject, with a view to give his champion time to sustain his assertion. He stated in amount, to the minister, "You, Sir, remarked last evening, that you could silence any Universalist minister in a few minutes—you know at

the time, that I was a clergyman of that denomination, and for reasons which ought to have been reciprocal, I did not then feel at liberty to enter into controversy; but now you can, if you please, make trial of your skill, and if you should not succeed in putting me down in the *few minutes* you named, take as much time as you may deem necessary." And then taking up a Bible, and informing Mr. P—— that the matter in dispute must be settled by an appeal "to the law and to the testimony," he desired him to begin at Genesis, and produce one by one, the passages on which he relied for proof of the doctrine of endless misery.

After much entreaty, Mr. P—— declined looking out the passages—nor could he be prevailed on either to attempt to overthrow the doctrine of the restitution, or to undertake the defence of his own opinions. Mr. Freeman then, as he was accustomed to do, very frankly told the preacher in what light he viewed his conduct—that it reminded him of the "ass in the lion's skin," whose braying, instead of frightening others, only exposed him to their just contempt. Thus ended the assertion that any Universalist minister could be silenced in a few minutes, by the pretenders to exclusive orthodoxy—and thus it will always end with those who have the temerity to make the experiment in the presence of one who understands his subject.

An amusing instance of self-delusion, in relation to the abilities of Mr. Freeman, occurred in C——, in 1831. It is not introduced in this place, for the purpose of claiming honor for him as a disputant; because it will be readily inferred, that he was more conversant with his subject than the other could be—but merely to illustrate the fact, that from his general appearance he was liable to be greatly mistaken. Having some business at a store in the vil-

lage, he was there introduced by a friend to a member of the Baptist denomination, who after a few minutes, facetiously observed—that he was not aware that Mr. Freeman was a Universalist preacher, as judging from his general appearance, he should "take him to be a sober-faced Presbyterian." To this, he replied, that having been a Presbyterian, it was possible that the traces of its gloomy spirit had not yet worn out of his countenance, though he had reason to thank God that his heart was free from its corroding influence.

Soon after, a deacon of the Congregational church came in, to whom, for some unknown reason, the Baptist introduced Mr. Freeman as "a brother Presbyterian." The deacon was readily undeceived in this particular—but in the plenitude of his zeal, his polemical spirit waxed confident when he saw before him a tall, meagre, unpropossessing and feeble man; and he seems to have concluded that he might perhaps gather a few laurels from "the tug of war," or at least out-talk, if he could not out-argue him. He accordingly ventured on making the assault, and was unconsciously led forward beyond his means of safe retreat; until he was necessitated to break off abruptly, or betray the weakness of his resources. He chose the latter; and for some time was compelled to hear the proofs of the salvation of a world repeated with a bearing and an emphasis of which he had formed no conception.

There is a natural, and occasionally a whimsical connexion between the operations of the mind and the actions of the body, which sometimes forces itself upon our observation. The deacon fidgetted—alternately sitting and standing—and finally was pressed rather awkwardly against the counter, leaning back as if to avoid the force—not of a blow, but an argument; his opponent standing full before him with a huge quarto Bible open

in his right hand, and spread significantly under the very eyes of the deacon, his left hand beating a kind of regular time to the intonations of a voice which fell with the weight of a millstone upon his discomfited assailant. Nor was he permitted to vent his feelings in the usual exhortation, but was obliged to receive the much-needed admonition, to read his Bible with devout and prayerful attention—to open his mind to the teachings of truth, and his heart to its benevolent impressions—to divest himself of the rancorous spirit of sectarian intolerance, and to yield to every man the exercise of the rights of conscience. With this, he was permitted to depart—and the only remark he was ever known to make respecting the subject, was, that Mr. Freeman was "a smart fellow!"

In the early part of 1833, the society in Lebanon made preparations to build a meeting-house. The materials were collected and the work carried moderately forward during the Summer. This fact is mentioned as evidence of the success of his ministry. For we know of no more distinct and unexceptionable evidence in general, of the fidelity and usefulness of a minister, than that the society builds and pays for a convenient church. That there are exceptions, we do not doubt—but they only serve to prove the general position. Mr. Freeman felt a very deep interest in the progress of this undertaking, and looked forward to the time of its completion, as that which would circumscribe the field of his labors. For he expected to do, as his worthy successor has done—to divide his time between the two societies of Hamilton and Lebanon, and to preach alternate Sabbaths in each place. But he did not live to realize his hopes, or see this neat and convenient church completed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Accession of Disease—His Death.

We have hitherto omitted to mention an additional disease with which Mr. Freeman was afflicted, from the circumstance that it was probably very intimately connected with the immediate cause of his death. In the Winter of 1832, he took the whooping-cough, which then prevailed in his vicinity, and not being aware of what it was, presuming it to be a common cold or catarrh, he gave no particular attention to the subject for a considerable time. At length it affected him so severely, that he several times dispensed with his desk labors; and for a few weeks it nearly confined him to his room. As soon as he had partially recovered, he resumed his accustomed duties regardless of his sufferings, and frequently preached when wholly unable to do so. But from this time his health visibly declined. He was frequently affected with hoarseness, a cough, and a sense of oppression about the chest. Still he made no great exertion to obtain relief—though he occasionally endeavored to lessen his pulpit services. And for this purpose, he undertook short journies with the view of suspending his exertions; but was too frequently led by the urgent entreaties of his friends to forego his resolution. In one word—he *must* preach, and he would preach even at the evident sacrifice of his comfort and his health.

In August, 1833, he became so sensible of the advances of disease, that he resolved on making a journey to the sea-shore. His original design was, to visit Saratoga, New-York, Southold, on Long Island, and Philadelphia.

From some cause—probably from a little delay previous to the commencement of this journey, and his great desire to be at the Fall Associations in the western part of the State—he went no further than the city of New-York. Another consideration of some weight with him, was, that by returning when he did, he would have the company of friends, and be able to attend the session of the Hudson River Association. This was his last interview with any of the members of that body.

From this journey he derived considerable immediate benefit, and returned with every indication of an improved state of health. So illusive are all things that appertain to earth alone. Yet the season of the year—the moderate exercise of travelling—the change of scenery, of habits, of company and of thought—and above all, the partial suspension of his intense mental and physical exertion, had wrought in a few weeks a favorable change in his appearance and in his own feelings. The affection of the lungs—if indeed they were diseased, was less troublesome, and he felt much encouraged that this particular source of debility and suffering might yet be entirely overcome. And what particular influence, if any, this affection might have had upon the aspects and results of his last sickness, can now never be known; and it does not appear to have ever been taken into consideration by any of those who tendered medical aid.

But he was not constituted to be quiet—and could not be satisfied with what he would call inaction, even when it comprised the performance of duties which might well occupy much of the time and labor of almost any other man. And dear as *home* was to him, and necessary as it had now become as the place of repose; he could not deny himself the privilege of undertaking another short journey. And he had scarcely arrived at home, when he

again set out to attend the Cayuga Association of Universalists, at Genoa. Here he consummated his labors in the desk. He preached several discourses after the dreadful disease that closed his labors and his life, had finally fixed its iron grasp upon his feeble frame.

Mr. Freeman had been for a number of years, subject to distressing paroxysms of what is called *nervous headache.* This he frequently induced by intense study, or by almost any unusual mental excitement; and it was the general consequence of his preparation for the desk. Hence, he had been led to prepare himself at the earliest possible time; and then to throw himself into free and familiar conversation for a few minutes previous to commencing the service, with a view to draw off his mind from the consideration of his subject. By this means he generally avoided that high degree of excitement which was so perplexing as well as distressing in its results. But it seldom gave him any particular solicitude, as a few hours repose generally restored him to usual health and comfort. At the close of the Association he was suffering from this affection, and the general irritation of the nerves indicated an unusual derangement of the system. The usual means of restoration were tried without effect; being constantly counteracted by renewed exertion. At length, finding himself sinking under the accumulated sufferings from pain, and want of refreshing rest, he undertook and made the journey home of about sixty miles, alone; and in a state of suffering which admits of no adequate description. The last efforts of his feeble frame were made and exhausted in his exertions to reach home; and after a few minutes, he laid down—to rise no more in time. He was fully sensible of his danger—told his family that he should not recover, and soon fell into a comatose state from which he only aroused at intervals, and

expired about six o'clock in the afternoon, on Saturday, October 19, 1833.

The progress of his disease and the triumphant exercise of his faith are given in the following extract from the notice of his death, which appeared in the Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate, of October 26, of the same year, and which was furnished by Rev. D. Skinner.

"Medical aid was immediately called, and ultimately a council of physicians was held, in reference to his case, but all to no effect. Possessed of a naturally feeble constitution, with great nervous weakness and irritability, with a burning fever raging within, and more particularly affecting the brain, that part of the system being still more intimately connected with the nerves, his frail earthly tabernacle was gradually wasted and dissolved, and one of the loftiest minds and purest spirits, with which we were ever permitted to hold converse on earth, took its departure for the unseen world.

"During most of the time after his return from Genoa, owing to the severity of pain in the head and the affection of the nervous system, his mind was either in a state of partial lethargy, or else floating as if in a sort of reverie. There were, however, several lucid intervals, when he seemed perfectly composed, self-collected, conscious of his situation, and conversed with perfect ease and freedom. Death had no terrors for him—his faith was strong and unwavering—the great salvation was his theme in sickness as well as in health—his mind seemed wholly absorbed in the great work of the ministry and plan of universal reconciliation—and he was often heard during his sickness, to break forth in devout thanksgiving, praise and prayer to God, always expressing the strongest confidence in his Maker's love—for this had been the most delightful theme of his ministry when in health."

Thus terminated a life of labor, of virtuous endeavor, of active usefulness—a life distinguished by many unequivocal traits which mark the man of superior endowments—a life full of instruction.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conclusion.

In the preceding Memoir, we have endeavored to give all the more important facts connected with the life of Mr. Freeman. Yet there are several particulars not mentioned, in which the reader may be supposed to feel an interest, though unimportant to our general plan. We have a strong and irrepressible desire to know something of the appearance of those persons concerning whom we hear much, and in whom either the public, or we ourselves take any particular interest. And in the indulgence of this propensity, we frequently form a supposed likeness of the individual in our imagination—and are almost as frequently disappointed, when by any accident we obtain a view of the original.

To a stranger, there was little in the appearance of Mr. Freeman from which to argue the properties of his mind. He was about the middling height—very slender and thin favored; with light hair, high open forehead and depressed temples. His eyes were blue, bright, full and clear; and possessed that searching and rolling motion, so peculiarly indicative of a nervous temperament. He had a fine set of teeth, but so strangely disposed as to discompose the natural position of the lips—his mouth was

uncommonly large, and of course well adapted to that full and easy utterance for which he was distinguished. His step and motions in general were quick, and seemed to partake of the rapid combinations of his mind. He was grave, but not gloomy—serious, but cheerful; and always met his friends with an affectionate smile. He was particularly attentive to his dress, and neat—though not fastidious in his appearance; and would sometimes humorously observe, that a clergyman was not fit for the pulpit who was a sloven, or would not endeavor to wear a good coat.

It will doubtless be supposed, that with the talents, capabilities, power and attainments of Mr. Freeman, he must have been very popular. No; this was not absolutely true of him, nor as true as it ought to have been; but he was rising steadily and rapidly in public estimation. He undoubtedly possessed in a much greater degree, the requisites of good oratory and genuine eloquence, than any member of his denomination in western New-York. But he had preached scarcely four years, and his retiring and diffident manner perpetually drew him from the conspicuous positions in which he would have been more fully appreciated. It was indispensably necessary to his popularity that he should be known. And it was not till he was lost to us, that a full sense of his great value was very generally felt and understood. Had he lived only a few years longer, it is fair to presume that no man in the State could have successfully filled his place. For no man could throw that indescribable and potent charm over a congregation which was the concomitant of his ordinary labors, and which was so much the more efficacious, because unpremeditated.

It will be recollected that when Mr. Freeman first made the avowal of his faith in the restitution, it met with a "cold reception" from his companion. And the inquiry

will naturally arise—did she become, either a believer in the same glorious truth, or so far reconciled to his views as to yield him their quiet and peaceable enjoyment? It is believed that during his life, she never saw the fulness and excellency of "the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men." But with true goodness of heart, she appeared to cherish, and uniformly exercised the utmost kindness of Christian charity. His guests—his friends were ever received and treated with that courtesy and friendship which an unwilling and suppressed bigotry could never have inspired, and which were truly worthy of the benevolence of the Gospel. After his death, the recollection of the virtues and excellencies of his life—the composure and peace of mind which he exhibited—the devotional character of his death—and the solitude of the house of mourning, probably induced new and more enlarged views on the subject of religion. She had previously felt an interest in the society to which he ministered—she now became devoted to its meetings. And though it might be presuming to state she believes in the system of universal salvation, we yet feel authorized to say—she rejects the doctrine of interminable misery, and derives great and manifold comforts from the hopes inspired by the promises of future life and glory for all mankind.

Mr. Freeman left four small children—his step-mother and a cherished sister were also members of his family. In their welfare and comfort he indeed took all the interest of a son and a brother. His sister had long been attached to his household—his mother, by his exertions, had recently joined herself to the kindred circle. And it was a circumstance peculiarly gratifying to her, and no doubt to him, that she was now with him to watch the progress of disease, and in the last dread moment, when all earthly ties are severed, to close his eyes in the slumber of death.

These now were left, like his children, without a protector and a guide.

The society in Hamilton has done itself, and the memory of its late pastor, great honor, by the performance of every requisite act of friendship and kindness to his family. The pecuniary pledges which it had made to him, were faithfully redeemed; and "the fatherless and the widow" have received every token of unfeigned respect, and unwearied and affectionate attention. A plain and neat marble slab has been procured, which now stands in the church in which he formerly ministered, for the inspection and satisfaction of his friends, but which will shortly be placed at the head of the grave where he is interred; on which is the following brief and comprehensive inscription:—

THIS STONE IS ERECTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN HAMILTON, TO THE MEMORY OF THEIR LATE PASTOR, REV. JOHN FREEMAN. BORN MAY 14, 1800—DIED OCTOBER 19, 1833. HE WAS A MAN OF STRONG INTELLECTUAL POWERS—A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL. "HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

FINIS.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF REV. JOHN FREEMAN.

BY MISS U. M. FELTON.

And has he gone?—our pastor and our friend!
Will he no more the sacred page attend—
No more its precious contents to explore?
Shall we behold that reverend form no more?
Yes, Freeman's gone—his humble spirit's fled!
He now lies slumbering with the silent dead;
Whilst disenthralled from all the cares of earth,
His spirit's gone to God who gave it birth.
Weep not, lone widow; He who called him hence
Will be to thee thy refuge and defence:
Thy orphans, too, he'll shield from earthly harms,
And safely fold them in his tender arms.

But still I mourn his loss; for whilst I write,
I still remember with unfeigned delight,
How oft I've listened, with enraptured heart,
To the glad tidings which he did impart.
Departed saint! thy memory long will live
Within this heart, and silently I grieve
To think that one so loved, so just, so good,
Could not be spared to point us to the road
Where wisdom, truth and happiness are found,
And joys unnumbered and refined abound.

BY REV. E. M. WOOLLEY.

Alas! 'tis done. The fatal shaft is sped—
He now lies sleeping with the virtuous dead!
But still remembered by his friends sincere,
Whom he instructed while he journied here.
He labored as his Master gave command—
He preached the Gospel to his fellow-man—
This cause was ever nearest to his heart,
And from its precepts he did not depart.
May his example be to all a light,
To guide their feet and set their hearts aright;
That, though his voice we ne'er shall hear again,

His life yet speaks, nor to us speaks in vain.
For whilst I write, I still remember well
The burning words, as from his lips they fell;
The unbeliever listened with delight,
And often answered, "Surely he is right!"
Freed by the truth, they blessed the happy day
They heard him preach and found the better way.
Thus many a soul he saved from error's train,
And led them back to virtue's courts again.
His loss I mourn. I'll drop the silent tear—
I've lost a friend, a counsellor sincere—
But whilst I mourn my loss, his was the gain,
He's freed from toil, from trouble, and from pain.
No more he'll plead with sinful man below,
Nor lead the sinner from the path of woe—
No more he'll stand a herald of the truth,
Nor plead for virtue with the strength of youth!
Farewell, dear spirit, fare thee well awhile,
Thy steps I'll follow, in thy labors toil,
Till, like thee, I am called from hence, above,
To join thee in the mansions of our Father's love.

BY REV. LEWIS C. BROWN.

Farewell to thee, brother—peace hallow thy slumber,
And green be the turf o'er the place of thy rest;
Thy brethren, assembled, shall miss from their number
One spirit that warmed and enlivened the rest.

A fearless apostle who braved persecution
Has fought the good fight and his armour laid down,
Proclaimed the glad news of the great Restitution,
Nor turned in his course at the bigot's cold frown.

A mind of such vigor, such warmth and expansion,
Its shackles of clay could not longer enchain—
It struggled for freedom—has rent the frail mansion,
And sought the abode of its Father again.

Though thy little ones weep and their mother deplore thee,
In sighs that through lapse of long years cannot cease,
Yet shall even affection's bright tears that fall o'er thee
Be mingled with balm from the Gospel of peace.

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